

# **EXHIBIT 51**

# NCAA EXTERNAL GENDER EQUITY REVIEW

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Phase II

October 25, 2021



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Review Process & Scope .....	4
2. Summary of Findings.....	6
3. Summary of Recommendations.....	10
<b>THE NCAA’S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE &amp; CULTURE.....</b>	<b>13</b>
1. The NCAA’s Organizational Structure.....	13
2. Staff Size & Allocation.....	16
3. The Budget & the Budget Process.....	19
4. Recommendations.....	23
<b>BROADCAST, CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP &amp; BRANDING.....</b>	<b>28</b>
1. Media Agreements & Corporate Sponsorship .....	28
2. Branding.....	31
3. Recommendations.....	34
<b>THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE .....</b>	<b>37</b>
1. The Student-Athlete Experience.....	37
2. Recommendations.....	48
<b>CHAMPIONSHIP &amp; COMMITTEE STRUCTURE.....</b>	<b>51</b>
1. Joint or Coordinated Committees .....	51
2. Combined Championships .....	53
3. Recommendations.....	57
<b>CASE STUDIES.....</b>	<b>60</b>
1. Baseball & Softball.....	60
2. Ice Hockey .....	72
3. Lacrosse .....	77
4. Volleyball.....	85
5. Gymnastics.....	91
6. Tennis.....	93
7. Swimming & Diving.....	96
8. Soccer.....	100

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

9. Golf .....	103
<b>SINGLE-GENDER SPORTS .....</b>	<b>110</b>
1. Men-Only Sports.....	110
2. Women-Only Sports .....	111
<b>DIVISIONS II &amp; III.....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>ENSURING PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUITY .....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>EXHIBIT A: SPORT-BY-SPORT FACT SHEETS.....</b>	<b>124</b>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Earlier this year, a viral video comparing the spacious weight room at the Division I Men's Basketball Championship with the single tower of hand weights provided at the Division I Women's Basketball Championship brought public scrutiny to issues of gender equity at the NCAA.<sup>1</sup> The attention did not stop with basketball. The public spotlight that revealed disparities at the basketball championships in Indianapolis and San Antonio soon highlighted differences in the experiences of male and female student-athletes at other NCAA championships held this past spring.

As these events were unfolding, NCAA President Mark Emmert directed NCAA Senior Vice President (SVP) of Championships, Joni Comstock, who oversees all 84 of the NCAA's non-basketball championships, to "check everything." For the first time, the NCAA's Championships staff undertook an expedited review of the supplies, services, and resources provided by the NCAA to the student-athletes participating in all NCAA championships other than basketball. Looking at the men's and women's championships by sport (e.g., men's and women's tennis, men's and women's lacrosse, men's and women's ice hockey, etc.), the Championships staff compared, among other things, equipment and supplies, schedules, and athletic, medical, and housing services.

From that review, the NCAA was able to identify gender discrepancies in approximately nine out of 23 sports, and to address some of those discrepancies before the spring 2021 championships took place. For example, the NCAA increased the travel party size for women's lacrosse so that it was equal to the travel party size for men's lacrosse. It also ordered new commemorative chairs for softball to match the ones already ordered for baseball. While several of the inequities identified were quickly corrected, many others could not be resolved with short-term fixes. The SVP of Championships and her staff highlighted the findings of their internal gender equity review in a meeting with the NCAA Board of Governors on April 27, 2021.

Despite the NCAA's efforts, the media and the college sports community continued to raise concerns about gender disparities in a number of the NCAA's spring championships. The New York Times, for example, reported striking disparities between the Men's and Women's College World Series, describing how "one sport's players get showers, off days, massages and a festive dinner, while the others get doubleheaders and sweaty bus rides back to a hotel."<sup>2</sup> (Baseball is the former; softball the latter.) Various other news outlets reported outrage among players and fans over the NCAA's decision to cancel one of its regional women's golf tournaments because of inclement weather.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sedona Prince (@sedonerrr), TikTok (Mar. 18, 2021), <https://www.tiktok.com/@sedonerrr/video/6941180880127888646>.

<sup>2</sup> David Leonhardt, *Massages for Men, Doubleheaders for Women*, N.Y. Times (June 4, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/04/briefing/college-sports-gender-inequality.html>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Steve Gress, *Commentary: NCAA Tone Deaf Again in Women's Golf Fiasco*, Gazette Times (May 16, 2021), [https://www.gazettetimes.com/sports/beavers-sports/commentary-ncaa-tone-deaf-again-in-womens-golf-fiasco/article\\_6a223283-34c7-595e-a4db-bc8ea8d07b97.html](https://www.gazettetimes.com/sports/beavers-sports/commentary-ncaa-tone-deaf-again-in-womens-golf-fiasco/article_6a223283-34c7-595e-a4db-bc8ea8d07b97.html); Jack Seddon, *Social Media Slams "Disgusting" Acts of NCAA After Women's Event Is*

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase I

That there are gender inequities at NCAA championships other than basketball is, while disappointing, not a surprise. As our August 2, 2021 Phase I report on basketball concluded, gender disparities in the NCAA championships stem from the structure and culture of the NCAA itself. As we explained in our Phase I report, woven into the fabric of the NCAA is a pressure to increase revenue to maximize funding distributions to the membership, which relies heavily on the NCAA's support. This pressure led the NCAA to prioritize Division I men's basketball over women's basketball in ways that create, normalize, and perpetuate gender inequities.

Phase II of our review has shown that this same pressure has led the NCAA to invest more—and in some instances considerably more—in those championships that it views as already or potentially revenue-producing, while minimizing spending for other championships.<sup>4</sup> Because the mere handful of championships that the NCAA views as revenue-producing are exclusively men's championships—Division I baseball, men's basketball, men's ice hockey, men's lacrosse and wrestling—this has significant implications for efforts to achieve gender equity between the men's and women's championships in those sports. The NCAA's simultaneous failure to put in place systems to identify, prevent, and address gender inequities across its championships has allowed gender disparities in these and other sports to persist for too long.

The result has been cumulative, and is only compounded by the fact that the men's championships have a much longer history at the NCAA than the women's. It is impossible to understand the gender disparities in the NCAA's 24 sponsored sports without acknowledging the significant head start that men's sports have had at the NCAA. The NCAA did not sponsor a championship for women until the fall of 1981, more than 75 years after the association was founded. And the women's championships are almost universally newer than the men's: since 1981, all of the Division I championships added to the NCAA roster have been in women's sports.

In the last 40 years, women's sports have effectively been playing catch up at the NCAA. In this pursuit, women's sports have received support from many in the NCAA who have made concerted efforts over the years to advance gender equity. For example, more than a decade ago, the NCAA adopted a number of gender-neutral policies, such as its per diem and travel policies, to ensure that male and female student-athletes within the same division are receiving the same level of funding for certain activities. To encourage the growth of women's sports, in 1994, the NCAA put in place the concept of "emerging sports for women" and a lower sponsorship threshold for women's sports to qualify for the creation of a new NCAA championship—a minimum threshold of 40 school sponsors for women's sports, as compared to 50 for men's sports.<sup>5</sup> And, as a general matter, the Division I Competition Oversight Committee and Division II and III

*Cancelled*, Golf Magic (May 13, 2021), <https://www.golfmagic.com/golf-news/social-media-slams-disgusting-acts-ncaa-after-womens-event-cancelled>.

<sup>4</sup> The NCAA considers a "revenue-producing" championship to be one in which gross revenue, excluding revenue from television and marketing rights fees, exceeds spending—in other words, one in which the NCAA nets a profit.

<sup>5</sup> NCAA Bylaws 18.2.4.1, 18.2.4.2 (originally adopted Jan. 11, 1994, last amended Jan. 17, 2009).



Championships Committees strive to ensure that requests made for the men's championship in a given sport are also presented to and considered for the women's, and vice versa.

Our Phase II review has shown that these gender equity efforts are capable of bearing fruit. We found that many NCAA sports have made progress in providing equitable championship experiences for their male and female student-athletes. Because of the nature of this review, which necessarily involved a high-level analysis of the 84 championships within its scope, we focused on certain key characteristics of equitable championships, though other relevant information may exist for each sport. For example, many of these sports have either joint committees and joint staff or, at a minimum, separate committees and staff that communicate and coordinate well with one another. In addition, many of these sports hold either joint championships or championships that use the same facilities in back-to-back weeks. And many of these sports receive equitable levels of funding and staffing from the NCAA for the men's and women's championships. These sports can serve as models for gender equity in NCAA championships. While there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution that will work for every sport, the experiences of these sports corroborate the findings of our Phase I report, which identified collaboration between committees and staff, combined championships, and equitable financial and staff support as potential ways of addressing gender disparities.

The NCAA will never achieve gender equitable experiences for all student-athletes, however, until it adopts the right systems to identify, prevent, and address gender disparities, as we highlighted in our Phase I report. That must change. And it can. The NCAA has already shown that changes can be made—and with some speed—when there is sufficient attention and commitment by the NCAA's leadership, membership, staff, and other stakeholders.

Since our Phase I report was released in early August 2021, the NCAA has taken a number of meaningful steps to achieve greater gender equity in its championships—some at our recommendation and others on its own. For example, in response to our Phase I recommendations, the NCAA has extended the use of the March Madness trademark to the Division I Women's Basketball Championship and has adopted a "zero-based budgeting method" for Division I basketball.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the NCAA has added rest days for Division I women's gymnastics, softball, and women's volleyball, and has expanded the Division I women's golf regionals from four sites to six sites to match the men's regional structure.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, the NCAA's work in achieving gender equity across its championships for all its student-athletes is far from completed. Many challenges remain. But the NCAA's recent efforts provide cause for optimism that with the right tools, focus, and resources, the NCAA can live up

<sup>6</sup> Greg Johnson, *March Madness Brand Will Be Used for DI Women's Basketball Championship*, NCAA.com (Sept. 29, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/general-march-madness-brand-will-be-used-for-di-womens-basketball-championship>.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee (Sept. 17, 2021).

to its stated commitment to “diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators.”<sup>8</sup>

## 1. Review Process & Scope

While the 2021 Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships were still ongoing, the NCAA retained Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP (KHF) to review disparities that had been identified between those championships. Our firm’s mandate was not limited to basketball, however. The NCAA asked KHF to conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of gender equity issues in connection with all NCAA championships, to assess the causes of any gender disparities, and to make recommendations for how the NCAA should address those disparities going forward.

At the NCAA’s direction, our review was to be completed in a timeframe that would allow the NCAA to consider our recommendations and begin the implementation process in time for the upcoming championship season. To accommodate this timeframe, our review was divided into two phases. In Phase I, KHF studied the NCAA’s policies, practices, and culture with respect to gender equity and how the NCAA’s administration of its championships impacts the student-athlete experience. The keystone of that analysis was an in-depth review of the NCAA’s basketball championships, which was conducted over the course of approximately four months and involved extensive interviews, document review, and the retention of a media expert to assess the true value of the broadcast rights to the Division I Women’s Basketball Championship. The findings from Phase I were released to the public on August 3, 2021, and are available at <https://ncaagenderequityreview.com>.

For Phase II, which was conducted over the course of approximately three months, KHF was asked to assess gender disparities in the experiences of male and female student-athletes at the NCAA’s 84 other championships, for which more than 500,000 student-athletes, across 23 sports and three divisions, strive to qualify. These sports include baseball, beach volleyball, bowling, cross country, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, ice hockey, indoor track and field, lacrosse, outdoor track and field, rifle, rowing, skiing, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling. Rather than placing any single sport under a microscope—as the Phase I report did with basketball—our Phase II report looks at NCAA championships through a broader lens, identifying patterns or trends in the ways in which the NCAA’s policies, practices, and culture around gender equity impact the student-athlete championship experience, as well as highlighting factors that can lead to more equitable championships. As part of this effort, we completed nine different case studies of Division I and National Collegiate (NC)<sup>9</sup> championships—baseball and softball, ice hockey, lacrosse, volleyball, gymnastics, tennis, swimming and diving, soccer, and golf—to further explore these patterns and

<sup>8</sup> NCAA Inclusion Statement (adopted by the NCAA Executive Committee April 2010, amended by the NCAA Board of Governors April 2017), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/ncaa-inclusion-statement>.

<sup>9</sup> National Collegiate championships are NCAA championships for which schools from multiple divisions are eligible.



trends and to provide context for our recommendations. *See* pp. 60-109. We also prepared data-driven fact sheets (compiled at Exhibit A) for all NCAA sports besides basketball.

As in Phase I, the NCAA guaranteed KHF independence in its work on Phase II and cooperated fully in our fact-gathering efforts. The NCAA further committed to respect the confidentiality of our communications with, and the anonymity of, any sources who asked not to be identified to the public or the NCAA. While NCAA staff were given an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of certain facts (*e.g.*, budgetary numbers), the NCAA did not approve this report or change any of its recommendations before it was issued. The NCAA committed to this report's public release.

While the scope of this review was in many ways extremely broad, it was not unlimited. At the NCAA's direction, we analyzed disparities between the men's and women's championships of like sports—for example, comparing the experience of student-athletes at the women's lacrosse championships with that of student-athletes at the men's lacrosse championships. We did not compare championships across sports or conduct an analysis of gender equity across NCAA championships in the aggregate. In the course of our review, many stakeholders expressed the view that such an analysis would be of value to the NCAA, as well as frustration that such an analysis was not part of this review. While those questions fall beyond the purview of our work here, we encourage the NCAA, its members, and its stakeholders to consider, based on the NCAA's own internal gender equity review and our Phase I and II reports, whether any additional gender equity analysis related to any particular sport, or across all championships in the aggregate, would be useful as the NCAA continues to undertake the work necessary to ensure an equitable experience for all of its student-athletes. We note in this regard that a significant challenge to conducting such an aggregate review is that the NCAA's current methods of collecting and maintaining information about, among other things, ticket sales, corporate partnerships and activations, and championship amenities across championships do not facilitate such a review. Improving this data collection and maintenance will be an important first step towards enabling effective gender equity reviews in the future. *See* Recommendation A.2 below.

Given the number of championships at issue, Phase II of our review was a significant undertaking. The analysis reflected in this report is informed heavily by the work we did in Phase I, which included interviews with a total of 144 NCAA staff, committee members, and third-party contractors and organizations working with the NCAA, as well as 280 external stakeholders, including coaches, student-athletes, athletic directors, commissioners, senior woman administrators, and sports organizations and institutes. That work also involved the collection of more than 4,000 documents from the NCAA and the creation of a website that allowed the public to submit comments relevant to our review.

We did additional work to gather information specific to Phase II. As detailed below, we used multiple methods to gather information relevant to our review:

- ***Questionnaires.*** At the outset of our review, KHF sent questionnaires to four categories of stakeholders: NCAA staff, NCAA committees, conference commissioners, and coaches associations. Specifically, we sent questionnaires to (1) the NCAA staff member

responsible for coordinating the championship in each division for each of the 23 sports covered by Phase II; (2) the chair of the committee for each of those championships; (3) each conference commissioner for Divisions I, II, and III; and (4) the head of the primary coaches association for each sport. The questionnaires were designed to elicit information about inequities observed between the NCAA championships held for each gender within a sport. For single-gender sports, respondents were asked to compare similarly situated sports offered for the other gender. KHF received a total of 185 questionnaire responses.

- **Interviews.** KHF also conducted interviews with a total of 68 external stakeholders and 25 key NCAA staff and committee chairs. Among those external stakeholders were commissioners, athletic directors, academics, coaches, and organizations that focus on gender equity in intercollegiate sports. Among the staff and committee members were the championship managers for many of the NCAA's championships, as well as the chairs of several NCAA sport committees. KHF also met with the SVP of Championships, the Chair of the Competition Oversight Committee, and multiple current and former Managing Directors of Championships and Alliances.
- **Documents.** In addition, KHF requested, received, and reviewed thousands of internal documents from the NCAA. The documents covered a range of topics, including championship spending and revenue, broadcast and attendance data, host venue contracts, budgets and budget requests, and internal analyses of the needs of various championships. In total, KHF received approximately 8,100 documents as part of our Phase II review.
- **Website submissions.** Finally, KHF created a website at the beginning of Phase I, [ncaagenderequityreview.com](http://ncaagenderequityreview.com), where anyone could submit comments and provide information for consideration in this review. Submissions continued through Phase II, and as of the date of this report, that website has received over 18,600 unique visitors and more than 1,780 submissions from student-athletes, parents, coaches, fans, NCAA staff, and others.

## 2. Summary of Findings

In Phase I of our review, we concluded that the NCAA has not lived up to the principle of gender equity because of the structures and systems of the NCAA itself. Our first report analyzed the ways in which those structures and systems led to stark and long-standing gender inequities in the Division I basketball championships.

In Phase II, we reviewed 84 NCAA championships in three divisions across 23 sports and identified how those same structures and systems have impacted the tens of thousands of student-athletes who participate in those championships each year. We identified some sports with significant gender disparities in the experience they provide to male and female student-athletes. We identified other sports where stakeholders voiced no gender equity concerns and described their championships as gender equity role models for the NCAA. And we identified sports where



gender equity efforts have been made, and yet some issues went overlooked or unrecognized until this year. This broad survey has allowed us not only to further understand the causes of gender disparities in NCAA championships, but also to isolate the characteristics that more equitable championships share, which can provide guidance for how to advance gender equity in the NCAA's championships moving forward.

*The NCAA's organizational structure and culture prioritizes revenue-producing sports, contributing to gender inequity.* The same structural and cultural issues that impact Division I basketball pervade the NCAA and have shaped its treatment of other championships. The NCAA membership's heavy reliance on the money it receives from NCAA revenue distributions has placed pressure on the NCAA to maximize that revenue and minimize spending so that more funds can be distributed to the membership. Because the NCAA has limited staff and financial resources to allocate among its many championships, this means that championships that are not viewed by the NCAA as already or potentially revenue-producing receive less support.

For the vast majority of NCAA sports, the result is that the men's and women's championships of like sports are resourced equitably (albeit perhaps minimally). But for sports in which one championship is viewed as producing significantly more revenue than its gender counterpart, stark differences in spending and staffing emerge, leading to inequitable student-athlete experiences in those championships. Today, the only championships that the NCAA considers revenue-producing are men's championships: Division I baseball, men's basketball, men's ice hockey, men's lacrosse, and wrestling.<sup>10</sup> It is when those sports have women's counterparts that we observed the greatest resource disparities and resulting gender inequities. Similarly, the NCAA invests more in those women's championships that generate more revenue than their men's counterparts, such as Division I women's volleyball and women's gymnastics, as those women's championships are considered potentially revenue-producing while their men's counterparts are not.

Additional resources are understandably required to support championships that have, for example, larger audiences, more student-athlete participants, and live broadcasts. It is also understood that the NCAA has a goal of maximizing revenue to ensure its own long-term sustainability and the distribution of predictable and significant funds to its membership, which can be critical to helping support their athletic programs. Championships in the earlier stages of growth and development—as are many of the women's championships—are not considered by the NCAA to be its largest, most revenue-producing championships. Nevertheless, they deserve a fair shot to get there, which they cannot do without sufficient resources.

Despite the numerous NCAA championships in which resources are allocated equitably or even equally, spending per Division I and NC championship participant (excluding basketball) in 2018-19 was \$4,285 on the men's side compared to \$2,588 on the women's—a difference of

<sup>10</sup> Currently, only men have an NCAA wrestling championship. Wrestling is an "Emerging Sport for Women."

\$1,697 per student-athlete.<sup>11</sup> Of course, a calculation of average spending per student-athlete does not explain the potential reasons for these differences (*e.g.*, fan attendance), but it can still serve as one useful benchmark in examining gender equity in the allocation of resources between men's and women's championships.

The NCAA needs to have a clear, transparent process in place for actively monitoring whether differences in spending and staffing between championships are appropriately tied to a championship's particular needs and characteristics, or whether they instead result in unacceptable gender inequities that can impact the student-athlete experience. The NCAA should also have a similar process for allocating resources among championships in the first instance that takes gender equity into account. Where there is no clarity around how resources are being allocated between championships, there is certainly no way to ensure that any resource allocation is equitable from a gender perspective.

*The structure of the NCAA's media agreements encourages uneven investment in championships, further contributing to gender inequity.* As we found in Phase I, the NCAA's media contracts prioritize support for Division I men's basketball to the exclusion of all other championships. The significant expense of buying into the CBS/Turner corporate sponsorship program, which bundles the marketing rights for all other championships together with the media rights for Division I men's basketball, means that the cost of sponsoring championships other than men's basketball is often prohibitive. As a result, many championships outside of basketball have little to no corporate sponsorships at all.

Some, however, do. In those instances, the incentive structures created by the NCAA's media contracts result in a system in which corporate sponsorship dollars—and the associated benefits, including fan fests and other items that contribute to a championship's "look and feel"—are disproportionately spent on men's championships over women's championships within the same sport. For example, the NCAA has an agreement with CBS/Turner in which CBS/Turner manages the fan festivals at the Division I Men's Basketball Championship, the Division I Men's College World Series, the Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship, the Division I Men's Frozen Four, and the Division I Wrestling Championship, but only manages one fan festival for a women's championship, the Division I Women's College World Series.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> To calculate the average spend per student-athlete, we divided the total spend for Division I and NC men's and women's championships by the total number of student-athletes who participate in the men's and women's championships, respectively. See below at p. 21 n.41 for more details.

Throughout this report, we use NCAA financial data from 2018-19, unless otherwise indicated. See NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019. The 2018-19 year was the last full year that the NCAA held all of its championships without accommodations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>12</sup> See Letter Agreement between CBS/Turner and the NCAA regarding the NCAA Fan Festivals at 2 (Mar. 14, 2016) ("Fan Fest Agreement"); see also, *e.g.*, 2019 Wrestling Settlement Statement; 2019 Lacrosse Settlement Statement; 2019 Frozen Four Settlement Statement; 2019 Women's CWS Settlement Statement; 2019 Men's CWS Settlement Statement. As discussed in our Phase I report, CBS/Turner holds sponsorship and media rights for the women's basketball fan festival, but is not required to provide the same services as it does for the men's championship. See Phase I Report at 69.



The NCAA does not have the necessary infrastructure in place to encourage corporate sponsors—even within the existing contracts—to activate at championships in a more equitable manner. And efforts to grow corporate sponsorships for championships other than men’s basketball currently lack accountable, measurable means to their success.

***The NCAA lacks the infrastructure necessary to effectively monitor, assess, and ensure gender equity.*** As we found in Phase I, internal and external efforts to increase gender equity have fallen short because the NCAA does not have the systems in place (and the infrastructure to support them) to ensure transparency and accountability around gender equity. The NCAA does not maintain standardized data across the NCAA’s 90 championships in a way that facilitates gender equity reviews and audits. Moreover, the organization lacks the staff, resources, and processes to ensure that its commitment to gender equity is being realized: it does not perform regular gender equity audits or reviews and does not have sufficient staff with relevant expertise to do so. Many of our recommendations in Phase I were intended to address this structural failing, which we found equally impacts NCAA championships other than basketball.

***Combined championship structures and collaborative sport committees and staff meaningfully increase gender equity.*** The impact of resource disparities in some sports are compounded by the fact that the staff and committees for some men’s and women’s championships operate in “silos,” *i.e.*, independently from one another, with little strategic coordination, communication, or common purpose. Our review of sports other than basketball has identified two structural configurations that contribute to increased equity in the championship experience of male and female student-athletes: a combined (in some way) championship for men and women, and a combined—or, at a minimum, well-coordinated—sport committee.

In our Phase II review, we have seen that combining at least some portion of the men’s and women’s championships for a given sport enables more coordinated planning, increases equity in the goods, services, facilities, and resources provided at the championships, and eliminates or reduces disparities between the “look and feel” of the tournaments, including as a result of combining corporate sponsorships and promotions. All of this, of course, leads to a more equitable student-athlete experience.

Numerous sports have combined their men’s and women’s championships in some way. Some sports, like track and field and cross country, hold their entire men’s and women’s championships on the same days in the same location. Others, like tennis, hold only certain rounds of the men’s and women’s tournaments together. Still others, like golf, swimming and diving, and water polo hold a portion of the men’s and women’s championships in the same venue on staggered dates. And a few sports—fencing, rifle, and skiing—hold a single co-educational championship.

In addition, a joint committee structure helps to advance gender equity by facilitating communication and collaboration in the planning and execution of the championships. While these joint championship and committee structures increase equity, they are not “one-size-fits-all” solutions and must be calibrated to the unique characteristics and needs of each sport and its student-athletes.



*Single-gender sports highlight some of the challenges facing newer and growing women's sports.* The NCAA hosts championships for six single-gender sports. Two of these are men only (football and wrestling), and four are women only (beach volleyball, bowling, field hockey, and rowing). In general, the men-only sports have been sponsored by the NCAA for far longer and in the aggregate receive more financial and staffing support than the women-only sports. For example, in 2018-19, the NCAA spent \$2,229 more per student-athlete for these men's championships than for the women's (an average of \$5,282 per student-athlete for the men's as compared to \$3,053 per student-athlete for the women's).

Although the NCAA has made efforts to invest more strongly in some of these women-only championships, most notably beach volleyball, limited resources for expansion of participation opportunities and overall improvements in the student-athlete experience can have an even greater impact on these younger and still growing championships, as is the case with many of the NCAA women's championships. By way of example, wrestling became an NCAA championship more than 50 years before field hockey, and 88 years before beach volleyball. The men's single-gender championships, and the NCAA men's championships generally, have a significant head-start on the women's, which has enabled the men's championships to become more well-established with strong fan bases while the women's championships play catch-up.

**Divisions II and III.** The student-athlete experience in Division II and III championships is more equitable across the board than in Division I and NC championships. Division II and III championships are not viewed as revenue-producing or potentially revenue-producing, so none receive the type of preferential treatment from the NCAA that certain Division I and NC championships receive. In addition, NCAA leadership in Divisions II and III explicitly prioritize gender equity across their championships, and there is more communication and coordination among Division II and III staff and committee members representing men's and women's programs. While Divisions II and III have managed to avoid many of the more significant gender equity issues that are present in Division I, some disparities do exist. The most common disparity concerns the venues for final round games, as well as at least one notable disparity in Division II and III lacrosse. Nevertheless, Divisions II and III can benefit from the same kinds of process and system improvements that we have recommended for Division I, so as to ensure that they have checks in place to identify and prevent gender inequities in the future.

### 3. Summary of Recommendations

We believe that there are concrete steps that the NCAA can take to address the gender inequities identified in this report and their underlying, systemic causes.

Many of those steps were described in our Phase I report. In Phase I, we concluded that the NCAA's inability to live up to its stated commitment to "diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators" stemmed from the structures and the systems of the NCAA itself. It was clear from our Phase I assessment that some of the root causes of gender inequity—including the lack of an NCAA infrastructure to effectively monitor and assess gender equity, as well as the NCAA's financial structure and its related pressures and

incentives—impact all of the NCAA championships and not merely basketball. We therefore made a series of recommendations in our Phase I report that were not specific to basketball, but were intended to address these structural issues across the organization, including:

- 1.9: Evaluate and reward performance for contributions to gender equity.
- 1.10: Increase NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity.
- 2.3: Negotiate for a new tier of corporate sponsors for the Division I Women’s Basketball Championship (and other NCAA championships).
- 2.4: Create a new senior position of Chief Business Officer to implement a strategy in the marketing, promotion, and sponsorship of the championships that both prioritizes gender equity and ensures the long-term sustainability of the NCAA.
- 2.5: Implement an overall strategy to realize the value of the Division I Women’s Basketball Championship (and other championships across the NCAA).
- 2.6: Establish a system for tracking sponsorship activations across the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships (and all other championships across the NCAA).

Beyond these institution-wide recommendations made in Phase I, this report includes additional recommendations for making the student-athlete championship experience in sports other than basketball more equitable from a gender perspective. These recommendations—all of which are discussed in detail below—fall into the following categories:

***Organizational structure and culture***

- A.1: Develop clear criteria for making decisions about resource allocation among championships that integrate gender equity principles and transparency into the process.
- A.2: Establish a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data across the NCAA’s 90 championships that will facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits.
- A.3: Complete a gender equity impact statement in connection with significant actions taken outside of the annual championship planning process.
- A.4: Increase the number of senior staff in the NCAA’s Championships structure to improve oversight of gender equity.
- A.5: Over the next five years, conduct a “zero-based” budget for each championship to ensure that any gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable.
- A.6: Perform a real-time gender equity audit of all men’s and women’s championships and prepare an annual report on the results.
- A.7: Conduct an external gender equity assessment of all championships in five years.



***Broadcast, corporate sponsorship, and branding***

- B.1: Consider commissioning an independent valuation of the media rights of other championships or championship “packages.”
- B.2: Ensure equitable branding for all championships, including but not limited to gender modifiers in championship titles.

***The student-athlete experience***

- C.1: Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at all championships are gender-equitable.
- C.2: Create a transparent process for reviewing proposals to increase the size of a championship’s bracket/field, squad, bench, or travel party size that takes gender equity into account.

***Championship and committee structure***

- D.1: Conduct an assessment and develop a plan for combining or co-locating men’s and women’s championships where appropriate.
- D.2: For non-joint committees, establish regular communications between the men’s and women’s sport committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.

***Ensuring progress on gender equity***

- E: For the next five years, conduct an annual public assessment of the NCAA’s progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this report and the Phase I report.

## THE NCAA'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & CULTURE

As discussed in our Phase I report, the NCAA, a not-for-profit, member-led organization, is operated by two groups: (1) NCAA employees; and (2) the NCAA membership, which includes colleges, universities, and athletic conferences.<sup>13</sup> The NCAA employees (*i.e.*, leadership and staff) are largely responsible for the NCAA's day-to-day operations, which includes planning, running, and promoting the NCAA championships; supporting the work of the NCAA committees; managing the NCAA's relationships with corporate and media partners; and providing financial and programmatic support to its members.<sup>14</sup> Representatives from the membership—college presidents, athletic directors, coaches, and student-athletes—sit on and work through committees to determine the rules and policies that govern the NCAA and some aspects of college athletics generally for NCAA sports.<sup>15</sup> The NCAA committees are the key decision-making bodies of the organization and make decisions on a wide range of issues, from how NCAA revenue is distributed to whether to expand a championship bracket or increase the number of days over which a championship is played.

Not surprisingly, we have found that the same tensions and pressures that we previously identified as being embedded within the NCAA are influencing and impacting all of the NCAA's championships. The membership's heavy reliance on the monies it receives from the NCAA's revenue distributions has had a significant impact on the structure and culture of the NCAA. Many academic institutions are operating under incredible financial strain, particularly in light of the pressures put on college and university budgets due to COVID-19. Member institutions are dependent on the financial support they receive from the NCAA, and this, in turn, puts pressure on the NCAA to maximize revenue and minimize expenses for championships that do not produce revenue so that more funds can be distributed to the membership. This has led to inequitable student-athlete experiences, particularly where one sport is viewed as significantly more revenue-producing than its gender counterpart.

### 1. The NCAA's Organizational Structure

The SVP of Championships, a position currently occupied by Joni Comstock, oversees all of the championships besides men's and women's basketball.<sup>16</sup> The SVP of Championships reports to the Chief Operating Officer/Chief Legal Officer.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> What Is the NCAA, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/ncaa-101/what-ncaa>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> How the NCAA Works, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/champion/how-ncaa-works>.

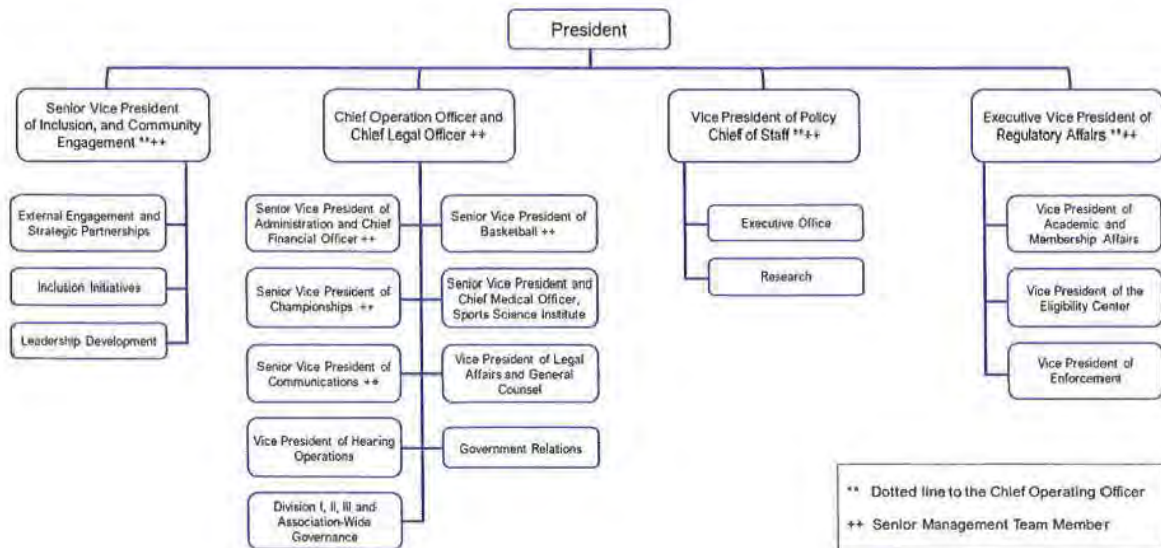
<sup>16</sup> National Office Leadership Team, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are/office-president/ncaa-leadership-team>.

<sup>17</sup> The SVP of Championships currently reports directly to the President of the NCAA because the Chief Operating Officer/Chief Legal Officer position is not currently filled.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

### Senior NCAA Leadership at the Time of the 2021 Spring Championships



Currently, the SVP of Championships’ primary responsibilities are overseeing the planning and execution of the 84 championships besides men’s and women’s basketball,<sup>18</sup> and external operations for all 90 championships, including licensing, statistics and media coordination, ticketing and marketing, and social media and digital. The 84 championships that the SVP of Championships oversees on the championships operations side include all divisions of all 23 sports besides basketball.

The SVP of Championships has three managing directors who report directly to her: two managing directors work on championship operations for the 84 championships, and a third manages a team that addresses external operations for all 90 championships.<sup>19</sup> Until 2020, there was an additional managing director for championship operations, but that person retired and the NCAA has no current plans to fill that position. The two championship operations managing directors oversee all of the championship managers and their assistants—that is, the NCAA staff who plan and execute all of the championships other than men’s and women’s basketball (“Championships staff”). The managing director charged with external operations oversees the

<sup>18</sup> See National Office Leadership Team, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are/office-president/ncaa-leadership-team> (noting the SVP of Championships oversees 84 championships). Division II and III men’s and women’s basketball sit in a unique place in the NCAA’s organizational structure. For the planning and execution of the Division II and III basketball championships, the staff who work on these championships report to both the SVP of Basketball—who is generally in charge of supervising play-related matters for the championships, such as rule changes and court markings—and the SVP of Championships—who oversees everything else, including budgets and the divisional policies and procedures for the championships. See Phase I Report at 101.

<sup>19</sup> September 2021 Championships Operations and External Operations Organizational Chart.



NCAA staff who provide assistance in specialized areas (such as social media and marketing) to the championship managers (“External Operations staff”).<sup>20</sup>

### Current Reporting Lines to the SVP of Championships



As our Phase I report described, the NCAA organizational structure is set up to align the NCAA’s chief revenue-generating departments with basketball, and often specifically with men’s basketball.<sup>21</sup> The SVP of Basketball manages the NCAA’s broadcast relationships, branding, and corporate sponsorship program for all NCAA sports.<sup>22</sup> As a result, those broadcast and sponsorship relationships largely benefit men’s basketball, to the exclusion of all other championships.<sup>23</sup> See pp. 28-31. Our Phase I report recommended that the NCAA change that structure, consolidating those functions with the media coordination, digital and social media, and marketing functions, which are currently under the SVP of Championships, and moving all of them under a new position of Chief Business Officer. The Chief Business Officer could then focus on implementing a strategy for the marketing, promotion, and sponsorship of all championships that prioritizes gender equity.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> See Phase I Report at 50-52.

<sup>22</sup> NCAA Organizational Chart; Phase I Report at 50-52.

<sup>23</sup> See Phase I Report at 67-78.

<sup>24</sup> See *id.*, Recommendation 2.4.

## 2. Staff Size & Allocation

The NCAA has 42 full-time Championships staff to plan and execute the 84 championships other than the basketball championships. For context, there are 11 full-time staff working on the Division I Men's Basketball Championship and seven full-time staff working on the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, or a total of 18 staff to plan and execute two of the NCAA's basketball championships.<sup>25</sup>

As a result, the NCAA must make difficult decisions about how to best allocate limited staffing resources among these 84 championships. First, the NCAA assigns each championship a dedicated championship manager who is responsible for the championship's planning and execution.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the championship manager, the NCAA provides some championships with varying levels of additional Championships staff support, as well as staff support from corporate relations, broadcast, and External Operations.<sup>27</sup> The NCAA usually assigns two to three championships to each championship manager, typically in different athletic seasons.<sup>28</sup>

The NCAA's allocation of staffing resources among its many championships appears to follow its general pattern of dedicating more resources and support to the championships that it perceives as more likely to produce revenue for the organization and its members. Division I baseball, for example, is allocated the largest amount of NCAA staff time of any championship after Division I men's and women's basketball—5.08 full-time equivalent employees, or FTEs. *See pp. 65-66.* Overall, championships with larger audiences, more prominent broadcasts, and greater overall revenue-producing potential are more likely to receive a greater share of Championships staff, as well as more specialized staff to assist with other elements of the championships, including corporate sponsors, broadcasting, and marketing.<sup>29</sup> Because those championships are also more complex and challenging to manage, the NCAA leadership explained that they often provide them with more experienced staff, leaving the other championships with less experienced Championships staff.

While appearing to follow this general pattern, the NCAA's process for making staff allocation decisions lacks any real clarity or transparency. Some NCAA staff members explained that there are three "categories" of championships—referred to as "equity," "growth," and "sustained"—that are used as a framework to guide decision-making about External Operations staff allocation. An "equity" championship is one that is considered to be revenue-producing, or to have the potential to become revenue-producing, and therefore warrants additional support to

<sup>25</sup> Men's and Women's Basketball Championships Roster (as of Mar. 1, 2021); 2020-21 Women's Basketball Organizational Chart.

<sup>26</sup> The formal titles of the people filling this role vary, but we use the term "manager" as it is used in NCAA championship manuals to refer to the person responsible for the operational oversight of each championship.

<sup>27</sup> 2021-22 Tournament Operations Assignments (as of Sept. 16, 2021); 2021-22 NCAA Championship Marketing and Ticketing Who to Contact; 2021-22 NCAA Media Coordination/Statistics Staff Who to Contact; 2021-22 NCAA Digital – Who to Contact.

<sup>28</sup> 2021-22 Tournament Operations Assignments (as of Sept. 16, 2021).

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*; 2021-22 NCAA Championship Marketing and Ticketing Who to Contact; 2021-22 NCAA Media Coordination/Statistics Staff Who to Contact; 2021-22 NCAA Digital – Who to Contact.



increase “the probable return on investment, asset value and corporate and broadcast partner interest.”<sup>30</sup> A “growth” championship is one that has the potential to grow, gain popularity, and bring in revenue over time, and which therefore warrants an intermediate level of support. And a “sustained” championship is one to which the NCAA dedicates minimal staff resources and on which it is generally considered to be losing money.

Although these three categories were frequently invoked by NCAA staff to explain why some championships receive more staffing resources than others, there appears to be no formal or consistent definition of these categories, and no process or mechanism for either reviewing a championship’s assignment or moving a championship from one category to another.<sup>31</sup> When asked which championships fall within which categories, NCAA staff provided different lists. The current categories do not appear to have been shared with or approved by the Competition Oversight Committee, *see* pp. 51-52, or any other current NCAA committee. In fact, there remains little understanding among the NCAA membership and even among NCAA staff about how staffing support is allocated among championships. And there appears to be no uniform practice for allocating staff (or any other) resources based on these three categories.

We were told that from their creation, these categories distinguished between championships based on whether they were or had the potential to be “revenue-producing,” with only those that made or could make the NCAA a profit placed in the top resources category. A former NCAA staff member explained that even a decade ago, when these categories were first considered, the NCAA staff recognized that if the top category were limited to revenue-producing sports, it would contain only men’s sports. Recognizing that as a problem and gender equity as a value, the staff reformulated the categories to give additional support to the sports that had the potential to be revenue-producing, like Division I softball and Division I women’s volleyball, “to start putting more into women’s sports because they’re on the verge of moving.” One individual recalled that the initial decisions regarding these categories were discussed with a marketing subcommittee of the former Division I Championships/Competition Cabinet, with assistance from a marketing research company, but that appears to be the last time that there was any formal evaluation of the process.

Where there is no transparent and consistent system for resource allocation, there is certainly no way to ensure that resource allocation is equitable from a gender perspective. For many sports other than basketball, NCAA staffing resources are, in fact, distributed equitably across men’s and women’s championships in the same sport. *See* p. 18. But not surprisingly, for sports where one championship is prioritized for resource allocation while its gender counterpart is not, the resulting inequitable staffing distributions can significantly impact the student-athlete experience.

<sup>30</sup> NCAA Championships – Celebrating Champions, Alignment of Resources and Staff Work.

<sup>31</sup> One list, which appeared most formal, contained seven factors: including (1) ticket sales and attendance; (2) revenue and ability to reduce expenses; (3) broadcast ratings and new media hits; (4) fan experience; (5) student-athlete experience; (6) awareness of the championships; and (7) brand development. *See* NCAA Championships – Celebrating Champions, Alignment of Resources and Staff Work.

## NCAA External Gender Equity Review

Phase II

There are several Division I and NC sports in which one championship receives significantly more staffing resources than its gender counterpart, including Division I baseball, Division I men's ice hockey, Division I men's lacrosse, NC women's gymnastics, and Division I women's volleyball.

**Division I & NC Sport-by-Sport FTE Numbers as of April 15, 2021**

SPORT	MEN'S FTE	WOMEN'S FTE
Baseball/Softball	5.08	3.51
Football	3.60	
Ice Hockey	2.62	0.67
Wrestling	2.59	
Lacrosse <sup>32</sup>	1.99	1.01
Golf	1.38	0.89
Soccer	1.03	1.16
Track (Outdoor)	0.79	0.82
Track (Indoor)	0.73	0.76
Gymnastics	0.62	1.34
Volleyball	0.62	3.11
Water Polo	0.59	0.52
Cross Country	0.54	0.45
Swimming & Diving	0.53	0.85
Tennis	0.39	0.72
Beach Volleyball		1.55
Bowling		0.71
Field Hockey		0.84
Rowing		0.60
Fencing*		.50
Rifle*		.36
Skiing*		.43

*\*Fencing, rifle, and skiing are co-ed championships, where men and women share staff and budgetary resources.*

Of course, measuring staffing by reference to FTEs does not accurately reflect the differences in the kinds of Championships and External Operations staffing, or the level of expertise, being provided to each championship. Nor does it capture the level of actual assistance (including non-NCAA staff and volunteers) provided on the ground during the championships. In

<sup>32</sup> These numbers do not account for recent changes in lacrosse staffing, as discussed below. See pp. 83-85.



Division I ice hockey, for example, there are 11 NCAA staff members who contribute to the men's tournament, including three Championships staff, a media coordinator, and seven External Operations staff members. The women's tournament, however, has only two Championships staff members assisting with it.<sup>33</sup> See p. 75. Such staffing imbalances can contribute to gender inequitable student-athlete experiences. As one ice hockey coach put it, "Because there is a point person for each aspect of the men's tournament, there is more attention to detail in a wider range of areas. On the contrary, those serving on the women's staff need to multi-task."

To some extent, different levels of staffing are understandably attributable to the differences between championships. A championship with a larger bracket or field size, and thus more student-athletes, may require more staff to manage it, as would a championship that draws a large broadcast and thus requires additional media credentials and coordination. See pp. 28-29. As we have stated previously, gender equity does not require perfect equivalence. But it does require that each gender's Championships and External Operations staff is able to provide NCAA student-athletes with a championship experience that is equitable to their gender counterpart's.

### 3. The Budget & the Budget Process

Budgeting for championships follows the same structures and processes that we described in our Phase I report.<sup>34</sup> The key difference for these championships as compared to basketball is that the NCAA spends far less money on them, leading to difficult budget decisions that have far-reaching gender equity impacts on the student-athlete experience.

**The budget process.** The NCAA's budget for all championships is based on a 10-year model set forth by the Chief Financial Officer, as approved by NCAA senior leadership. This 10-year plan provides high-level projections for Division I distributions, Division I and NC championships and programs, allocations and revenues for Divisions II and III, and association-wide expenses. Based on these 10-year projections, each year, the Board of Governors approves a proposed business plan, reviewed by several executive staff and committees, which determines how much each championship is allocated for that year.<sup>35</sup>

The business plan delineates the annual budget for all of the championships under the purview of the SVP of Championships and covers all regular and anticipated expenses to plan and put on the championships. This allocation is subject to an annual growth rate based on inflation. But overall, based on the NCAA's 10-year financial model, the Division I and NC championship budgets remain relatively stagnant from year to year.<sup>36</sup> Annually, the SVP of Championships recommends the budget to the Chief Financial Officer and President Emmert, who in turn

<sup>33</sup> 2019 Women's National Collegiate Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual; NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Staff List.

<sup>34</sup> See Phase I Report at 59.

<sup>35</sup> See *id.* at 59 n.184.

<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of the budget process for Divisions II and III, see below at pp. 115-16.

recommend the budget to the Division I Board of Directors Finance Committee and the Board of Governors.<sup>37</sup> The SVP of Championships makes these recommendations with input from the Competition Oversight Committee, which relays the membership's preferences.<sup>38</sup>

For the 2021-22 academic year, in conjunction with the 10-year plan, \$160.6 million has been allocated to championships across all three divisions. Of that \$160.6 million, \$63.7 million funds the six basketball championships, and \$96.9 million funds all of the other 84 championships, with \$49.6 million going to Division I and NC championships. Once divided among the 84 championships, there is a wide range in the amount that the NCAA budgets, and ultimately spends, on any one of these 84 championships—from more than \$16 million spent on Division I baseball in 2018-19 to less than \$230,000 on NC rifle that same year. *See pp. 19-22.*

Because, as was discussed in our Phase I report, the NCAA's general practice is to maintain similar budget line items as compared to prior years (*e.g.*, allocating a similar amount for gifts and mementos as the year before), differences in particular line items can grow unchecked for many years.<sup>39</sup> This budgeting practice necessarily favors established championships—generally the men's sports—over younger, growing championships—generally the women's sports—which are then forced to compete for the limited additional resources that are distributed each year. For example, because bracket expansions are expensive, some women's championships, like beach volleyball and women's ice hockey, have had to wait to get the necessary committee approval for a bracket expansion for which they have long been eligible. *See pp. 46-48.* As one member of the NCAA staff aptly explained, “the financial situation disproportionately affects women.”

**Data retention and review.** It is important to note that during this review, KHF was limited in its ability to perform direct comparisons of specific expense items or categories between like-sport championships (or across all NCAA championships) because the NCAA does not maintain its records of expenses, ticket sales, amenities, or other items in a standardized manner that would permit such analysis. For example, the NCAA collects information regarding the number of tickets sold and accompanying revenues for each championship, but for some championships the ticket revenues are for just the final round games and for others they are for a larger collection of games. In another example, the NCAA tracks expenses for each championship's “gifts and mementos,” but there is no central data collection for the number, amount, and quality of objects purchased such that one could accurately compare the purchases between two like championships, or across all championships. As such, the data currently maintained by the NCAA does not facilitate a deeper comparison of specific championship expense items.

<sup>37</sup> *See also* Phase I Report at 59.

<sup>38</sup> The SVP of Championships may also request additional funds from a small “association-wide allocation.” The association-wide allocation is a distinct budget allocation from which each championship and staff group can apply for a portion, and which is ultimately approved by several committees and the NCAA President. These association-wide requests are less frequent and represent only a small portion of the total budget each championship receives. *See id.* at 59 n.185.

<sup>39</sup> *See id.* at 59. While Championships staff reported that they have done a zero-based budget review at some point in the past decade, they do not have a formal or consistent process for doing so or current plans to repeat that review.



**Gender inequity in championship spending.** The NCAA's championship funding decisions have been heavily influenced by the same pressures, and organizational structure and culture, described above: the NCAA generally seeks to maximize revenue by investing more in those handful of sports it views as revenue-producing—which, currently and historically, are only men's championships. Specifically, the NCAA currently considers only the following five championships to be revenue-producing, meaning that they are considered to “turn a profit from operations before considering media revenue or staffing costs”: Division I men's basketball, baseball, men's ice hockey, men's lacrosse, and wrestling. Accordingly, the NCAA dedicates more financial resources to these Division I championships than to their Division I and NC women's counterparts.

SPORT	MEN'S EXPENSES	MEN'S REVENUE	WOMEN'S EXPENSES	WOMEN'S REVENUE
Baseball/Softball	\$16,036,861.00	\$28,316,064.00	\$6,361,695.00	\$4,009,901.00
Ice Hockey	\$4,235,662.00	\$5,842,212.00	\$656,827.00	\$154,189.00
Lacrosse	\$2,619,073.00	\$2,716,860.00	\$1,737,259.00	\$417,773.00

See also pp. 64-65, 74-75, 82-83.

There are also examples of sports in which the Division I or NC women's championship generates more revenue than the men's and receives a greater investment from the NCAA, such as:

SPORT	MEN'S EXPENSES	MEN'S REVENUE	WOMEN'S EXPENSES	WOMEN'S REVENUE
Gymnastics	\$320,190.00	\$59,093.00	\$1,164,234.00	\$785,313.00
Soccer	\$2,411,151.00	\$496,656.00	\$3,487,928.00	\$659,792.00
Volleyball	\$376,942.00	\$172,806.00	\$3,811,633.00	\$3,000,600.00

Generally, the result of the NCAA's spending decisions is that male student-athletes receive a greater investment than female student-athletes, on average. While there are approximately 650 more student-athletes participating in the NCAA's Division I and NC women's championships than in the men's championships (excluding the three co-ed championships, skiing, rifle, and fencing),<sup>40</sup> the overall average spending per student-athlete in Division I and NC championships (excluding basketball) is substantially higher for the men, by approximately \$1,697.<sup>41</sup> This spending difference is even more significant in Division I and NC single-gender

<sup>40</sup> The higher number of female student-athletes likely stems from the fact that the NCAA does not run championships for FBS football, and so FBS football student-athletes are not counted as participants in the NCAA championships.

<sup>41</sup> To calculate the average spend per student-athlete, we divided the total spend for Division I and NC men's and women's championships by the total number of student-athletes who participate in the men's and women's championships, respectively. To calculate the total number of student-athletes for team sports, we multiplied the bracket size (i.e., the number of teams participating in the championship) by the squad size, which is the maximum number of student-athletes per team allowed to dress in uniform and participate at the championship. To calculate the total number of student-athletes for individual sports, we used the field size, which is the total number of individuals permitted to compete in the championship. In calculating spending per male and female student-athletes, we did not include sports with co-ed championships and shared budgets, including NC skiing, rifle, and fencing.

sports, where the NCAA's average spend per student-athlete playing in the women's championships is approximately \$2,229 less than for those playing in the men's championships (\$3,053 on average for women and \$5,282 on average for men).

In our comparisons, we analyzed the per student-athlete spending averages because a significant portion of the costs of many championships comes from the travel and per diem costs, which are dependent on the number of student-athletes participating in the championship. We note, however, that many variables in the requirements and specifics of different championships and sports make it difficult to decipher trends in the aggregate data.

To be sure, gender equity does not require equal spending for men's and women's championships in the same sport, as championships with more fan attendance, corporate sponsorships, and media attention will necessarily require additional resources and support. But the NCAA also does not have a clear process for actively monitoring or considering whether the differences between championship budgets and spending within a sport are gender equitable, particularly when it comes to the impact on the student-athlete experience. Not surprisingly, the result is that the sports with the greatest spending disparities are also the sports with the greatest gender disparities in the student-athlete experience. *See* pp. 64-65 (baseball/softball), pp. 74-75 (ice hockey), pp. 82-83 (lacrosse). Moreover, the NCAA's continued investment in one gender's championship over the other's can perpetuate disparities by limiting the less-resourced championship's capacity for growth and development.

Conversely, it is perhaps no coincidence that sports in which student-athletes report more equitable experiences have more equitable budgets and spending. A prime example is tennis, where the NCAA spends virtually the same amount on both the Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championships, which are also the same size in terms of student-athlete participation: \$945,004 on the men's, and \$904,488 on the women's.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the NCAA spends a similar amount on the Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championships across the board, including on items such as apparel, awards, and mementos. *See* p. 95. Moreover, for individual (as opposed to team) Division I and NC sports, such as cross country and outdoor track and field, as well as sports that have a combined budget, such as fencing, rifle, and skiing, the amount spent on each student-athlete is roughly equivalent, and stakeholders do not report an inequitable student-athlete experience within those sports. *See* pp. 55-56.

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The greatest source of disparity between the per student-athlete spend on men as compared to women is in Division I baseball and softball, which have identical bracket sizes and slightly different squad, bench, and travel party sizes, yet the NCAA spends approximately two-and-a-half times more on the baseball championship than on the softball championship. *See* pp. 64-65. When those two championships are removed from these calculations, the NCAA's average spend per student-athlete is \$2,254 for women, and \$3,208 for men, or a difference of \$954.

<sup>42</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.



## 4. Recommendations

Among our central conclusions in our Phase I report was that the NCAA lacks the infrastructure necessary to effectively review budgets, staffing, or any other aspect of the basketball championships to monitor and assess gender equity. There is no individual—or group—within the NCAA responsible for that task. In the context of basketball, this allowed various institutional causes of gender inequity in the student-athlete experience to continue unchecked over many years, including significant disparities in the resources allocated to men’s and women’s basketball, an organizational structure that prioritized men’s basketball by subordinating women’s basketball, and the absence of mechanisms for communication and collaboration between men’s and women’s basketball staffs and committees. And, as our Phase II review has shown, the NCAA’s lack of infrastructure to monitor, assess, and ensure gender equity is in no way limited to basketball; rather, it impacts gender equity in the student-athlete experience in other sports as well.

In addition to recommendations that were specific to basketball, our Phase I report made recommendations for ways the NCAA could address this infrastructure deficiency institution-wide. Specifically, we recommended that the NCAA begin evaluating and rewarding staff performance for contributions to gender equity (**Recommendation 1.9**). While our Phase I report recommended specific protocols to ensure gender equity in the basketball student-athlete experience, and while this report recommends similar protocols across championships, actually achieving the goal of gender equity must be considered part of everyone’s job at the NCAA. Achieving gender equity is the responsibility of all NCAA leadership, and working towards gender equity goals is something that should be expected, evaluated, and rewarded as part of the NCAA’s internal performance review process for all NCAA leadership and staff.

Our Phase I report also recommended that the NCAA increase its staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity (**Recommendation 1.10**). To implement the recommendations in both the Phase I and II reports, additional full-time employees should be added (including in the Office of Inclusion) to assist with performing these tasks which, based on the recommendations made in this report, will be no small undertaking. These individuals should have experience with Title IX compliance as it relates to collegiate athletics and expertise in gender equity issues generally. Together, these two recommendations (**Recommendations 1.9 & 1.10**) will increase the expectations, incentives, and capacity of the NCAA staff to work on identifying and preventing gender inequity across all 90 NCAA championships.

In addition to these institution-wide recommendations, we make the following recommendations that are specific to championships other than basketball.

**Recommendation A.1**

Develop clear criteria for making decisions about resource allocation among championships that integrate gender equity principles and transparency into the process.

Beginning no later than the fall of 2022, the NCAA should:

- Develop a set of clear criteria to be used by NCAA leadership and staff, the Division I Competition Oversight Committee, the Division II and III Championships Committees, and all other relevant committees and leadership bodies within the NCAA when making decisions about how to allocate financial and staffing resources among the NCAA's 90 championships. While the criteria may include any other factors that those within the NCAA tasked with developing the criteria deem appropriate, and while different criteria may be weighed differently, gender equity should be one of the criteria.
- Establish a clear process for application of the above criteria on a regular basis to resource allocation decisions being made within the NCAA and its committee structure pertaining to championships.
- Ensure that the criteria and the associated process for applying the criteria are updated on an annual basis and made available to all NCAA staff, committee members, and membership institutions.

These resource allocation criteria and associated protocols should be developed by NCAA staff in all three divisions with expertise in championships, finance, broadcast, marketing, and corporate partnerships, as well as Title IX and gender equity issues.

**Recommendation A.2**

Establish a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data across the NCAA's 90 championships that will facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits.

To facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits, and to enable NCAA staff and stakeholders to better compare information and ensure gender equity, the NCAA should establish systematic practices for collecting and maintaining information in a more standardized way across all 90 championships. While the NCAA collects data for both financial and non-financial items, that data is often not collected or maintained in a way that would facilitate a comprehensive comparison of specific championship expense items between like-sport championships or across the organization. The NCAA's Research and Championships staffs, working with NCAA staff with expertise in finance, corporate partnerships, broadcast, marketing, and Title IX compliance



and gender equity issues, should propose a new system for maintaining relevant data by the fall of 2022.

### Recommendation A.3

Complete a gender equity impact statement in connection with significant actions taken outside of the annual championship planning process.

Recommendation 1.8 from our Phase I report should be applied to all of the NCAA's 90 championships, not just the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships.<sup>43</sup> Specifically, the gender equity impact statement template and associated submission and review process developed in response to Phase I Recommendation 1.8 should be applied to all championships. To the extent necessary, the NCAA should identify those actions being taken within the NCAA in connection with the 88 other championships that would require the submission of a gender equity impact statement.

### Recommendation A.4

Increase the number of senior staff in the NCAA's Championships structure to improve oversight of gender equity.

The two managing directors for operations within Championships currently each oversee 42 championships. To better ensure oversight of gender equity with respect to these 84 championships, the NCAA should increase the number of managing directors for operations reporting to the SVP of Championships by at least one.<sup>44</sup> The 84 championships should then be distributed among the managing directors in a way that will maximize their ability to monitor for, identify, and promptly address any gender equity issues or concerns as they arise within a sport. This will provide for increased oversight of and emphasis on gender equity at the highest levels of the NCAA's Championships operations and give the managing directors additional bandwidth to work on ensuring that the NCAA's championships are being planned and executed in a way that is gender equitable.

<sup>43</sup> See Phase I Report at 65-66.

<sup>44</sup> If distributed evenly among the three managing directors, this would mean each managing director would be responsible for overseeing 28, instead of 42, championships.

**Recommendation A.5**

Over the next five years, conduct a “zero-based” budget for each championship to ensure that any gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable.

In Phase I, we recommended that the NCAA undergo a budget reset in connection with Division I men’s and women’s basketball based on a “detailed assessment of whether discrepancies in the budgets are justifiable and appropriate in light of differences in the structure of the championships.”<sup>45</sup> Creating zero-based budgets for all of the NCAA’s championships will enable the NCAA leadership and the budget office to work together not only to ensure gender equitable budgets, but to create efficiencies across budgets and maximize the impact of spending.

We recognize that performing zero-based budgets for all championships will take some time. While the same level of benefits may not be achieved by creating zero-based budgets for each of the championships, we believe that it will be a useful gender equity exercise that may also free up additional resources to be redistributed among the various championships.

Before the next budget cycle, the NCAA should prioritize creating zero-based budgets for those championships identified in this report as having more significant budget disparities between genders. After that, the NCAA should carry out the same exercise for the remaining Division I and NC championships over the course of the subsequent four years, to be completed by 2026. With respect to the Division II and III championships, the NCAA should determine the order of priority for developing zero-based budgets, working with the Division II and III Championships Committees and in conjunction with their budget cycles. This process will require the budget office to work with the SVP of Championships, the Vice Presidents of Divisions II and III, the Championships staff, the External Operations staff, and the broadcast and corporate relations staff to collaborate on the strategic, efficient, and equitable use of championship funds.

**Recommendation A.6**

Perform a real-time gender equity audit of all men’s and women’s championships and prepare an annual report on the results.

Starting with the 2022 championships, the NCAA should begin implementing a real-time gender equity review protocol for all championships. The NCAA should be able to use the real-time gender equity review process developed for Division I basketball in response to Phase I Recommendation 1.5, combined with input from the internal gender equity review conducted by the SVP of Championships earlier this year. The review should include, at a minimum, those items

<sup>45</sup> Phase I Report, Recommendation 1.2.



set forth in Recommendation C.1 below. The review protocol should be standard across all championships, and should be developed and implemented by NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity issues generally, in consultation with the Championships staff responsible for the planning and execution of the men's and women's championships and the Division I, II, and III leadership.

Each year, the NCAA should prepare a standardized report of the results of the real-time gender equity reviews of the championships that took place that year. This standardized report can be modeled off the similar recommended report for the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships in Phase I Recommendation 1.6. The report for all other championships should be prepared by NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity issues who performed the real-time gender equity review. The report should go to the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women's Athletics, the Division I Board of Directors, the Division II Presidents Council, the Division III Presidents Council, and the NCAA President and Senior Management Team.

## Recommendation A.7

Conduct an external gender equity assessment of all championships in five years.

In conjunction with the external gender equity assessment of the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships, the NCAA should also conduct a companion external gender equity assessment of its other 88 championships to ensure that gender equity is being achieved. The assessment should be led by an external auditor with expertise in Title IX compliance in collegiate athletics and gender equity issues generally. The external auditor should provide its report to the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women's Athletics, the Division I Board of Directors, the Division II Presidents Council, the Division III Presidents Council, and the NCAA President and Senior Management Team, and an executive summary should be made publicly available on the NCAA's website.

## BROADCAST, CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP & BRANDING

### 1. Media Agreements & Corporate Sponsorship

As discussed in our Phase I report,<sup>46</sup> the NCAA is party to several contracts with its media partner, CBS/Turner, to broadcast the Division I Men's Basketball Championship, and to market and sell the NCAA's corporate sponsor program (the "Corporate Partner Program"),<sup>47</sup> which supports all 90 NCAA championships, in exchange for an annual average payment to the NCAA of nearly \$1.1 billion by 2032. The NCAA has also contracted with ESPN to broadcast 29 other NCAA championships<sup>48</sup> for a much smaller annual fee of, on average, \$34 million per year.<sup>49</sup> Like Division I women's basketball, the NCAA's other championships are negatively impacted by the structure of these contracts and the resulting inequitable attention that they receive from the NCAA's corporate partners, which in turn results in significantly lower sponsorship support—and potentially unrealized value for the NCAA and its membership.

*The structure of the media agreements limits corporate sponsorships and activations for championships other than Division I men's basketball.* As we explained in our Phase I report, the structure of the NCAA's media contracts prioritizes support for men's basketball to the exclusion of all other sports.<sup>50</sup> Because CBS/Turner controls the sponsorship rights for all 90 championships, but only the broadcast rights for the Division I Men's Basketball Championship, it is incentivized to focus its efforts on developing sponsorships for men's basketball above all other sports. And because Champions and Partners have to buy in to the costly CBS/Turner corporate sponsorship program, which bundles the marketing rights for all other NCAA championships together with the media rights for Division I men's basketball, the cost of sponsoring championships other than Division I men's basketball is often prohibitive. As one coach remarked, "we have sponsors who would like to [support] softball, but they have to go

<sup>46</sup> Phase I Report at 67-75.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 8. There are two tiers to the Corporate Partner Program, which currently has only 18 total sponsors. The first tier—called "Champions"—contains only three sponsors: AT&T, Capital One, and Coca-Cola. It requires a significantly higher buy-in and includes substantial rights in connection with various NCAA championships. The second tier—called "Partners"—contains 15 sponsors: Aflac, Buffalo Wild Wings, Geico, General Motors-Buick, Great Clips, Hershey's/Reese's, Invesco, Lowe's, Marriott Bonvoy, Mondelez/Nabisco, Nissan, Pizza Hut, Uber/UberEats, Unilever, and Wendy's. Both tiers pay a substantial annual fee to CBS/Turner in exchange for the marketing rights to the NCAA and all of its 90 championships, as well as the media rights to the Division I Men's Basketball Championship.

<sup>48</sup> The championships that ESPN agrees to broadcast are: Division I women's basketball; Division I softball and baseball; NC beach volleyball; NC women's bowling; Division I men's and women's cross country; NC men's and women's fencing; Division I field hockey; Divisions I, II, and III FCS football; NC women's gymnastics; Division I men's and women's ice hockey; Division I men's and women's lacrosse; Division I men's and women's soccer; Division I men's and women's swimming and diving; Division I men's and women's indoor track and field; Division I men's and women's outdoor track and field; Division I women's and NC men's volleyball; and Division I wrestling. Multi-Media Agreement between ESPN, Inc. and the NCAA (Dec. 15, 2011) ("ESPN Multi-Media Agreement"), Ex. A; Agreements between ESPN and the NCAA regarding Broadcast of Women's Ice Hockey, Field Hockey, Beach Volleyball, and Men's and Women's Cross Country.

<sup>49</sup> Phase I Report at 70.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.* at 70-71.



through the NCAA conglomerate. I have to believe that there are sponsors who would like to support women's sports specifically or softball specifically, and they can't."

Even where Champions and Partners might be interested in championships other than Division I men's basketball, the NCAA does not have sufficient systems in place to encourage those sponsors to activate at the other championships. Because the corporate sponsors' budgets to activate at other championships are limited, and because the NCAA does not regularly track activations across championships, efforts to grow corporate sponsorship for championships other than Division I men's basketball have lacked accountable, measurable means to enable their success.

Further complicating matters is an additional arrangement pursuant to which CBS/Turner agrees to manage the fan festivals at the Division I Men's Basketball Championship, the Division I Men's College World Series, the Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship, the Division I Men's Frozen Four, and the Division I Wrestling Championship, but only manages a fan festival at one of the women's championships, the Division I Women's College World Series. *See pp. 38-40.*

***Fewer corporate sponsors diminish the student-athlete experience.*** Due to these incentive structures, the support that the Division I Men's, and even Women's, Basketball Championship receives dwarfs the support that the corporate sponsors provide to other NCAA championships. Many championships, such as fencing, field hockey, rifle, and tennis, have little to no unique corporate sponsorship.<sup>51</sup> *See pp. 53-54.* Agreements with the Champions and Partners themselves indicate that few sponsors activate at other championships: independent media expert Ed Desser remarked that the Champions and Partners earmark only 0.1% of their aggregated contract price on championships other than Division I men's basketball, although corporate sponsors sometimes activate in connection with other championships outside of their contracts.<sup>52</sup> Because the NCAA does not retain a comprehensive list of all activations at all championships for each year, it is difficult to discern whether the overall lack of activation at championships other than Division I men's basketball gives rise to gender equity concerns, although anecdotal evidence suggests that it does.

Generally, the absence of corporate sponsors results in fewer fan events and a less professional "look and feel" for the student-athletes and fans, which detracts from the overall championship experience. Field hockey, for example, does not have any sponsorship activations at its championships. Stakeholders described the fan experience as "essentially non-existent" and said there is "no real national championship-caliber celebration" for the winning team and few gifts or mementos, distinguishing this experience from "male counterparts [in other sports] with sponsorships." These differences in corporate sponsor activation can and do occur for men and women student-athletes competing in the same sport. In Division I/NC ice hockey and lacrosse,

<sup>51</sup> Some Champions and Partners provide broad support for the championships, which changes from year-to-year. For example, Coca Cola often provides side-line PowerAde, including PowerAde water bottles, to all student-athletes, and another sponsor gifts student-athletes "locker room drops" at several championships each year.

<sup>52</sup> NCAA External Gender Equity Review, Media & Sponsorship Addendum by Desser Sports Media, Inc. (Aug. 2, 2021) ("Desser Report") § 1.5; Phase I Report at 73 n.222.

for example, corporate sponsors disproportionately activate at the men's championships over the women's. *See* pp. 72-73, 81-82. At the Division I soccer and volleyball championships, the corporate sponsors favor the women's tournament over the men's. *See* pp. 85-87, 103.

There are also the relationships with equipment suppliers, which sit outside of the Corporate Partner Program but provide additional equipment and gifts to student-athletes. For example, Rawlings Sporting Goods Company, Inc. contracts with both baseball and softball, providing equipment for the championships, as well as gifts for the student-athletes. Despite some inequities in the gifts Rawlings has provided in the past, at this year's championships, the NCAA worked with Rawlings to ensure that the mementos for student-athletes were equitable.

*ESPN's contract is undervalued and it broadcasts some men's and women's championships differently.* In Phase I of our review, with the NCAA's support, we engaged independent media expert Ed Desser to assess the value of the Division I Women's Basketball Championship as a media property. After utilizing multiple valuation methodologies, Desser and his team estimated that the annual broadcast rights for Division I women's basketball will be worth between \$81 and \$112 million in 2025—multiples more than ESPN currently pays annually to broadcast 29 championships, *including* Division I women's basketball.<sup>53</sup> While Desser did not perform a valuation for the other 28 championships that ESPN broadcasts, his report supports the conclusion that ESPN is, in general, significantly underpaying the NCAA—and thus causing the association to lose out on substantial and crucial revenue.<sup>54</sup>

The ESPN broadcast agreement grants ESPN and its subsidiary and sister networks (ESPN1, ESPN2, ESPNU, and ABC) the right to air these 29 championships. ESPN has considerable discretion regarding where to air each of the championships. In some years, like in the 2018-19 academic year, ESPN generally aired the men's and women's championships for a particular sport on comparable channels, with the notable exceptions of Division I ice hockey, lacrosse, and swimming and diving.<sup>55</sup> For example, the final games for both Division I baseball and softball were aired on ESPN, and the final games for both Division I women's and NC men's volleyball were aired on ESPN2.<sup>56</sup>

In other years, however, ESPN has more frequently broadcast the men's and women's championships for a particular sport on different channels with different audience sizes. In 2020-21, for example, ESPN broadcast the final games for Division I men's lacrosse and men's outdoor track and field on ESPN2, while broadcasting the women's championships for each of these sports on ESPNU. *See* (fact sheets). The former station is in more households and generally has an audience of a few hundred thousand viewers per day,<sup>57</sup> while the latter is a college sports channel

<sup>53</sup> Phase I Report at 75-78.

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *See* NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*

<sup>57</sup> ESPN2 TV Channel, Cable Rankings (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://ctv.kwayisi.org/networks/espn2/>.



with typical viewership numbers of fewer than 50,000 per day.<sup>58</sup> And in Division I ice hockey, ESPN broadcasts all rounds of the men's tournament on either ESPN2, ESPN3, or ESPNU, depending on the year, and has broadcast the finals on either ESPN or ESPN2 every year since 2013.<sup>59</sup> In 2018 and 2019, the Division I women's ice hockey semifinals and finals were broadcast on the Big Ten Network only; in 2021, ESPN streamed one of the women's semifinal games on ESPN3 and broadcast the other semifinal and final games on ESPNU. The women's first-round games are typically either streamed on NCAA.com or not broadcast at all.<sup>60</sup> *See pp. 73-74.*

Despite these disparities, stakeholders have reported that ESPN seeks to elevate championships that are gaining popularity to better channels with more viewership where possible, which has benefited women's championships. For example, this year, ESPN broadcast the final rounds of the NC Women's Gymnastics Championship on ABC, one of its affiliate networks, and viewership increased 510% between 2019 and 2021, with the largest ever audience for the NC Women's Gymnastics Championship. And in Division I softball, the NCAA has worked with ESPN to produce storylines about the student-athletes and teams and, over time, elements have been added to that broadcast "that make the viewer experience a lot better."

## 2. Branding

As with basketball, some other NCAA sports have used gender modifiers in front of the championship name for one gender in certain situations, but not the other (*e.g.*, "Final Four" to describe the Division I Men's Basketball Championship finals and "Women's Final Four" to describe the Division I Women's Basketball Championship finals). While the NCAA has largely phased out such differentiations, until very recently, branding disparities still existed in several sports.

For example, in ice hockey, the NCAA Twitter account @NCAAIceHockey uses "#FrozenFour" on social media to market the men's ice hockey championship, but "#WFrozenFour" to market the women's championship.<sup>61</sup> And the website linked on the Twitter account ([ncaa.com/frozenfour](https://ncaa.com/frozenfour)) goes to the NCAA's webpage for Division I men's ice hockey only.<sup>62</sup> *See pp. 73-74.*

<sup>58</sup> ESPNU TV Channel, Cable Rankings (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://ctv.kwayisi.org/networks/espnu/>.

<sup>59</sup> *See* NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>60</sup> *See id.*

<sup>61</sup> NCAA Ice Hockey (@NCAAIceHockey), Twitter (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://twitter.com/ncaaicehockey>.

<sup>62</sup> Men's Ice Hockey, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/icehockey-men/d1>.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



Image of the Twitter Bio for @NCAAIceHockey

Until recently in lacrosse, the NCAA used disparate branding for the Division I men's and women's championships. On social media, the NCAA's Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook pages for Division I lacrosse only covered the men's tournament until fall 2020, when the NCAA changed the pages to cover both championships (although the Twitter page is still linked to the NCAA men's lacrosse webpage).<sup>63</sup> And the Division I Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championships previously used different logos, with the men's logo appearing significantly more developed.



2019 Lacrosse Logos

In April 2021, following the issues that came to light at this year's Division I basketball championships, the NCAA conformed the two lacrosse logos, although the updated women's logo still did not appear on trophies during this year's championship. See pp. 79-81.

<sup>63</sup> NCAA Lacrosse (@NCAALAX), Twitter (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://twitter.com/ncaalax> (linking to [ncaa.com/lacrosse](https://ncaa.com/lacrosse), which is the website for Division I men's lacrosse).



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



2021 Lacrosse Logos

Historically, the Men's College World Series has not always included the gender modifier in its title, referred to instead as the "College World Series," while the women's final rounds were called the "Women's College World Series." In 2008, baseball's host agreement with Omaha, discussed further below, dictated that the finals should be referred to as the Men's College World Series. For many years thereafter, however, some of the NCAA's logos for the baseball championship still titled it the College World Series. The NCAA has since changed its logo to include the "Men's" gender moniker, but has continued to refer to the finals without that modifier in certain instances, like the NCAA's website referring to the "2022 College World Series":



Men's Website Containing College World Series Logo<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Image from the NCAA.



*Women's Website Containing College World Series Logo<sup>65</sup>*

After this year's basketball championships, the Championships staff reported that they increased their efforts to refer to the baseball finals solely as the Men's College World Series. One of the Omaha entities associated with the championship, however, continues to use the name "College World Series of Omaha, Inc." to refer to the baseball finals, which is accompanied by a website, [cwsomaha.com](https://cwsomaha.com).<sup>66</sup> And the NCAA's online presence continues to lag behind, with the Twitter and Facebook handles for NCAA baseball appearing as @NCAACWS, and the handle for NCAA softball appearing as @NCAASoftball.<sup>67</sup> See p. 70.

In volleyball, the NCAA recently converted its Twitter handle for volleyball (@NCAAVolleyball) into an account for women's volleyball only, and started a new Twitter account for men's volleyball with the handle @NCAAMVolleyball. See pp. 88-89.

It is important to note that earlier this year, the NCAA commissioned a branding and marketing study, through which the NCAA is exploring whether the brands for all championships are equitable and marketable.<sup>68</sup> That study remains ongoing.

### 3. Recommendations

In our Phase I report, we made a number of recommendations related to media agreements, corporate sponsorships, and branding that, if implemented, will promote gender equity across all championships and ensure that all championships—not just Division I women's basketball—are given the opportunity to grow to their full potential.

<sup>65</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>66</sup> College World Series of Omaha (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://cwsomaha.com/>.

<sup>67</sup> NCAA Baseball (@NCAACWS), Twitter (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://twitter.com/NCAACWS>; NCAA Softball (@NCAASoftball), Twitter (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://twitter.com/NCAASoftball>.

<sup>68</sup> Phase I Report at 79 n.254.



First, we recommended that the NCAA negotiate a new tier of corporate sponsors for the Division I Women's Basketball Championship and all other NCAA championships (**Recommendation 2.3**). This new tier of sponsorship would allow for customized sponsorship opportunities that attract corporate sponsors to other championships, thereby maximizing growth and revenue for sports other than Division I men's basketball.

We also recommended that the NCAA create a new senior position of Chief Business Officer (CBO) to implement a strategy in the marketing, promotion, and sponsorship of the championships that both prioritizes gender equity and ensures the long-term sustainability of the NCAA. (**Recommendation 2.4**.) This CBO would oversee the NCAA's media partner relationships with CBS/Turner and ESPN, the Corporate Partner Program, social media and digital, and branding and marketing for all championships—responsibilities that are currently split between the SVP of Basketball and the SVP of Championships. Having a single senior person implement a business strategy with a view toward marketing and enhancing gender equity in all NCAA championships, including by working with CBS/Turner to promote activations at championships other than Division I men's basketball, will help grow sports across the organization and allow the NCAA to provide a more equitable championship experience for its student-athletes. At the same time, we recommended that the NCAA implement an overall strategy to realize the value of the Division I Women's Basketball Championship and other championships across the NCAA (**Recommendation 2.5**).

Finally, we recommended that the NCAA establish a system for tracking sponsorship activations across the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships and all other NCAA championships (**Recommendation 2.6**). The NCAA should establish a system for tracking where, how, and for how much the NCAA's corporate sponsors have been and are activating, both historically and in real time—something not done at present with regularity. Such a system would enable the NCAA to better track revenue sources and evaluate potential sponsorship opportunities to further maximize growth across its championships.

In addition to these organization-wide recommendations, we make the following recommendations for NCAA championships other than basketball.

### Recommendation B.1

Consider commissioning an independent valuation of the media rights of other championships or championship “packages.”

In Phase I, with the NCAA's support, we engaged independent media expert Ed Desser to calculate the value of the media rights of the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, which ESPN currently broadcasts as part of a package of 29 championships. Desser determined that if the NCAA opens the bidding rights to the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, it would “unlock considerable value and attract far more bidders than keeping it combined with 28 other

NCAA Championships.”<sup>69</sup> Desser further concluded that not only would “break[ing] out and bid[ding]” the Division I Women’s Basketball Championship “unlock . . . value” for the NCAA, but so would breaking out some of the rest of the 28 other championships that ESPN currently contracts to broadcast.<sup>70</sup> Desser recommended that the NCAA consider putting out for bid “smaller packages” including, for example, the Men’s and Women’s College World Series.<sup>71</sup>

ESPN’s agreement with the NCAA expires in 2025. Accordingly, heading into these renewal discussions, the NCAA should consider exploring a valuation of some of the NCAA’s other championships, including those that are currently part of the ESPN package. Particularly because the NCAA has limited resources with which to plan and execute its championships, it should ensure that it is realizing any untapped monetary potential associated with these media rights.

## Recommendation B.2

Ensure equitable branding for all championships, including but not limited to gender modifiers in championship titles.

Following the 2021 Division I basketball championships, the NCAA commissioned a branding and marketing study to determine how best to maximize each sport’s brand and logo. As part of that study, the NCAA should ensure that it is addressing any disparities with branding from a gender equity perspective. For example, the NCAA has already announced that it has adopted our Phase I Recommendation 2.2 and will be using “March Madness” for both the men’s and women’s basketball tournaments.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the NCAA should ensure that there is no differentiation between men’s and women’s championships by using gender modifiers in front of one championship but not the other (*i.e.*, “Frozen Four” and “Women’s Frozen Four”).

This includes the NCAA’s social media platforms, which have lagged behind the NCAA’s other efforts to equalize championship branding. The NCAA should explore ways to ensure equitable handles and hashtags, and link its social media accounts to both the men’s and the women’s NCAA webpages. And while the NCAA has made strides to ensure equitable branding, it should continue to closely monitor and consider gender equity in connection with the type and quality of the brands and logos being used for all championships.

<sup>69</sup> Desser Report § 1.10; Phase I Report, Recommendation 2.1.

<sup>70</sup> Desser Report, Synopsis.

<sup>71</sup> *Id.*

<sup>72</sup> Alanis Thames, *N.C.A.A. to Use ‘March Madness’ Slogan for Women’s Basketball, Too*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 29, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/29/sports/ncaabasketball/march-madness-womens-basketball.html>.



## THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

### 1. The Student-Athlete Experience

Student-athletes, coaches, commissioners, and NCAA staff reported throughout our Phase II review that many of the same disparities in the student-athlete experience that we discussed in our Phase I report also present themselves in some of the other NCAA championships.

As discussed above, the NCAA allocates greater staffing, budgetary, and other resources to those championships that it views as already or potentially revenue-producing for the NCAA and its members. *See pp. 16-22.* Greater resources can pave the way for a higher quality student-athlete experience. Where a men's championship generates significantly more revenue than its women's counterpart in the same sport, or vice versa, gender disparities in the student-athlete experience may—and often do—arise.

The NCAA is aware that such disparities exist. Following media reports of gender disparities at this year's Division I basketball championships—and the vociferous advocacy of student-athletes, coaches, fans, and other stakeholders in response—the NCAA Championships staff, for the first time, conducted an internal gender equity review of the NCAA's championships. At the prompting of the NCAA President, the SVP of Championships sought feedback from the Championships staff for all 84 championships other than basketball, asking for input on and comparisons of, among other things, equipment and supplies, schedules, and athletic, medical, and housing facilities and services. As part of that process, Championships staff met and compared similarities and differences between the men's and women's championships in their respective sports.

As the staff identified gender equity issues with various championships, they took immediate steps to address those inequities where they could before the spring championships took place. For example, in connection with Division I, II, and III softball and baseball and Division I lacrosse, the NCAA reached an agreement with its equipment suppliers to provide equitable apparel and equipment to the men's and women's championships (e.g., providing an equitable number of lacrosse balls at each championship). Similarly, as previously discussed, the NCAA took steps to improve the Division I women's lacrosse logos and branding before the championship occurred in May 2021. *See pp. 32-33.* And for water polo, the NCAA realized that the men had \$5,000 in their budget for publicity, while the women had only \$2,100, and increased the women's budget to match the men's.

However, NCAA Championships staff explained that this review was not comprehensive and was done quickly during the championship season. The NCAA did not create any process to

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
(Phase 1)

track issues that were identified but not resolved, or to maintain a list of specific changes that resulted from the review.<sup>73</sup>

Despite these efforts, disparities between the men's and the women's student-athlete experience at several championships remain, particularly in the areas of fan events, signage, and venues. The NCAA appears to do a better job distributing equitable awards, gifts, and mementos, but better tracking of spending on those items would ensure that these are distributed on a consistent, equitable basis going forward. Finally, in certain sports, there are disparities in the number of championship participation opportunities relative to the total number of student-athletes in a sport.

**Fan events.** The NCAA puts on twice as many fan festivals for men's championships as it does for women's championships. According to NCAA staff, decisions regarding which championships will have a fan festival are "driven primarily by corporate champion/partner interest and activation." The Division I championships, aside from basketball, that currently have some form of a fan festival are:<sup>74</sup>

MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS	WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS
Baseball*	Softball*
FCS Football	
Ice Hockey*	
Lacrosse*	Lacrosse
Soccer	Soccer
Wrestling*	

For each of the championships marked with an asterisk (\*) above, CBS/Turner manages the fan festival per its arrangements with the NCAA.<sup>75</sup> CBS/Turner has the right to control and manage those fan festivals, including by "selecting vendors, hiring event staff, making financial and operational decisions, design and development of sponsor, concert and fan buildouts and areas, and other similar development, operational and management responsibilities."<sup>76</sup> Under its

<sup>73</sup> Once KHF was engaged to conduct this gender equity review, the NCAA largely paused any internal review so as to avoid taking steps that might be inconsistent with what KHF would recommend. At our request, the NCAA compiled a list of corrective actions taken during its internal gender equity review.

<sup>74</sup> This table only lists official fan festivals held by the NCAA and does not include championships that may provide smaller, one-off activations or interactive experiences for fans. For example, the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship does not hold an official fan festival, but occasionally offers interactive experiences and other smaller activations inside the championship venue, such as a photo booth.

<sup>75</sup> See Fan Fest Agreement at 2; see also, e.g., 2019 Wrestling Fan Festival Settlement Statement; 2019 Men's Lacrosse Fan Festival Settlement Statement; 2019 Frozen Four Fan Festival Settlement Statement; 2019 Women's CWS Fan Festival Settlement Statement; 2019 Men's CWS Fan Festival Settlement Statement.

<sup>76</sup> See Fan Fest Agreement at 2.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

agreement with the NCAA, CBS/Turner is also free to choose the financial model for the fan festivals it runs. For both baseball and lacrosse—historically the only two fan festivals that turn a profit—the agreement with CBS/Turner provides for a split of any net profit between CBS/Turner and the NCAA. For the remaining fan festivals, which historically lose money, the NCAA reimburses CBS/Turner for the amount of the net loss.

Even when there is a fan festival for both the men's and the women's championships, those festivals are often quite different in scale. As noted in the case studies for lacrosse and baseball/softball, *see* pp. 70-71, 81-82, the men's fan festivals are larger and have more corporate sponsor activations, music, and games than the women's fan festivals. These differences are reflected in the cost of the events—for example, in 2019, the baseball fan festival cost approximately \$274,800 while the softball fan festival cost approximately \$53,900.<sup>77</sup> There is, however, one women's fan event that is larger than its men's counterpart: the women's soccer fan festival is a bigger event with greater investment and corporate sponsor activations than the men's soccer fan festival. *See* p. 103.



*Pictures from Fan Fests at the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship and College World Series<sup>78</sup>*

<sup>77</sup> 2019 Women's CWS Settlement Statement; 2019 Men's CWS Settlement Statement.

<sup>78</sup> Images from the NCAA.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



*Pictures from Fan Fests at the Division I Men's Ice Hockey and Lacrosse Championships and College World Series<sup>79</sup>*

**Signage.** Like with basketball, some other championships have disparities in city and in-venue signage. As we discussed in our Phase I report, these differences can have a material impact on the student-athlete experience by giving one gender's championship a more professional and exciting atmosphere than the other's.<sup>80</sup>

For example, in several sports, the Division I and NC men's championship spends significantly more than its women's counterpart on signage, including baseball, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, and water polo. In other sports, the Division I and NC women's championship spends more than its men's counterpart, such as gymnastics and volleyball. For all other sports, spending on signage is relatively equitable. The following chart displays total spending numbers on signage for the Division I and NC championships:

<sup>79</sup> Images from the NCAA.

<sup>80</sup> Phase I Report at 40-45.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

**NCAA Total Spending on Signage in 2019<sup>81</sup>**

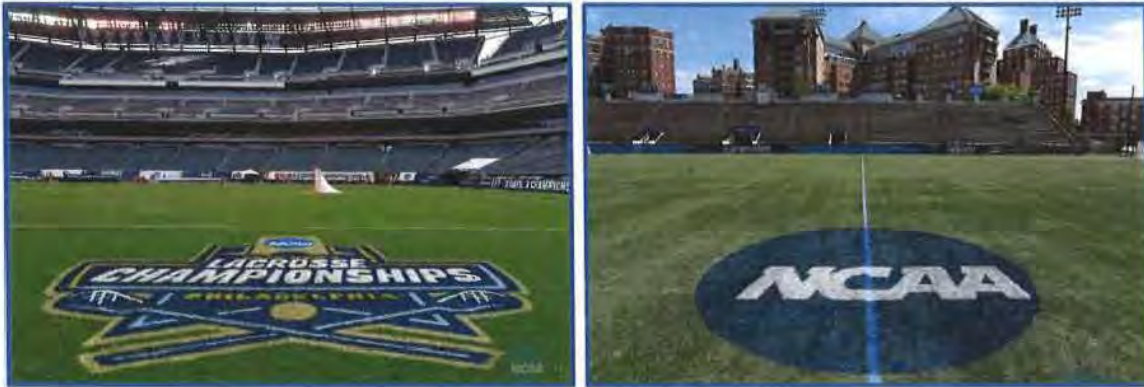
SPORT	MEN'S	WOMEN'S
Baseball/Softball	\$109,820	\$66,684
Cross Country	\$5,613	\$5,613
Golf	\$9,686	\$7,633
Gymnastics	\$2,483	\$22,841
Ice Hockey	\$89,435	\$23,777
Lacrosse	\$109,660	\$32,809
Soccer	\$53,849	\$40,037
Swimming and Diving	\$8,903	\$9,442
Tennis	\$8,607	\$8,346
Indoor Track & Field	\$5,620	\$5,620
Outdoor Track & Field	\$15,895	\$15,895
Volleyball	\$2,817	\$45,347
Water Polo	\$3,586	\$1,960
Wrestling	\$66,699	--
Football	\$63,417	--
Field Hockey	--	\$6,767
Rowing	--	\$1,407
Bowling	--	\$4,173
Beach Volleyball	--	\$21,408
Rifle		\$3,813
Fencing		\$2,738
Skiing		\$4,086

<sup>81</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



Signage at Men's and Women's Volleyball Championships<sup>82</sup>



Signage at Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championships<sup>83</sup>

**Venue.** Disparate venues for men's and women's championships can have a significant impact on the student-athlete experience as well. The difference in quality and size of venues results in different capacities for fans and, as one stakeholder described it, more “bells and whistles (video boards, etc.).” Some student-athletes play in large professional stadiums and arenas, while their gender counterparts play in smaller, minor league or college arenas.

For example, the men's lacrosse championship combines all three divisions and is held in a National Football League stadium each year, whereas all three divisions of the women's lacrosse championships are usually held separately in smaller semi-professional or college stadiums. *See pp. 78-79.*

<sup>82</sup> Images from the NCAA.

<sup>83</sup> Images from the NCAA.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



*The Men's (Left) and Women's (Right) Lacrosse Championship Venues<sup>84</sup>*

And as discussed in detail below, there are significant disparities between the Division I baseball stadium in Omaha and the Division I softball stadium in Oklahoma City, *see* pp. 62-65, as well as between the National Hockey League arenas used by Division I men's ice hockey and the on-campus arenas used by NC women's ice hockey, *see* pp. 72-73.



*The Men's (Left) and Women's (Right) Baseball and Softball Championship Venues<sup>85</sup>*

Other sports demonstrate the benefit of a shared venue for the men's and women's championships, including alleviating any possible gender disparities. For example, in swimming and diving, the men's and women's championships are often held at the same venue, which "alleviate[s] any previous concerns regarding access for the best-possible venues." *See* pp. 96-98. And the finals of the golf championships take place on back-to-back weeks at the same venue, which contributes to the similar student-athlete experience at both: "I do not notice differences between the NCAA men's and women's golf championships—I am sure due in large part because the championships are held [on] back to back weeks at the same golf course [and] staying at the same hotel." *See* pp. 104-06.

<sup>84</sup> Images from the NCAA.

<sup>85</sup> Images from the NCAA.

**Awards, gifts and mementos.** Disparities between awards, gifts, and mementos at championships can impact the student-athlete experience. Nevertheless, the NCAA does not systematically track, audit, or compare awards, gifts, and mementos provided to student-athletes at the various championships, which makes directly comparing the items provided significantly more difficult, if not impossible. Indeed, this informs our recommendations that the NCAA establish a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data across its 90 championships and that the NCAA track and ensure equity in items affecting the student-athlete experience, including but not limited to awards, gifts, and mementos. *See pp. 48-49.*

The NCAA coordinates participation awards through a centralized online gift suite system so that the men's and women's championships have access to the same options and have the same per student-athlete amount to spend on them. The online gift suite provides participation awards to "members of the official travel party of institutions that advance to the championship final sites."<sup>86</sup> All 88 championships outside of Division I men's and women's basketball use this same online gift suite.<sup>87</sup> Division I receives \$100 per member of the official travel party; Divisions II and III receive \$75 per member of the official travel party. There are seasonal (fall, winter, spring) options from which participants can select.



2020-21 Student-Athlete Participation Awards Brochure

<sup>86</sup> See Student-Athlete Participation Awards Brochure.

<sup>87</sup> This online gift suite is different from the one offered at the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships, which is run by a different company and offers different gifts.



Student-athletes receive other gifts and mementos from the NCAA as well. For example, both the Division I softball and baseball championships provide most outstanding player trophies, gold watches, and mini-trophies for certain players. Similarly, Division I men's and women's ice hockey champions receive national champion hats, t-shirts, and towels. And in Division I lacrosse, each person in the travel party receives a participant medallion, a PowerAde water bottle, and, in previous years, a banquet gift from STX Sporting Goods.

At present, there is no systematic way to determine whether the NCAA is spending equitably on awards, gifts, and mementos for student-athletes. The NCAA's general ledger tracks "Awards and Mementos" spending per championship, but neither total spending, nor per-participant spending, reflects the full picture. Total spending can be misleading since one gender's tournament may, for example, involve more teams than the other gender's tournament in the same sport; in such a case, a difference in total spending may be both expected and justified. Yet spending per student-athlete may not reveal gender equity issues either. Even where tournaments are differently sized, many gifts (including gifting suite gifts) are given only to participants who advance to the final rounds; in that case, dividing spending by the total number of championship participants may show a difference where there is none, or mask a difference where there is one. Complicating matters further, "some participating institutions do not redeem their credit for the gift suite with [the NCAA's] memento provider; as a result, there may be some instances where the NCAA does not incur the full amount of anticipated expenses." Again, complications such as these in calculating and tracking awards, gifts, and mementos to student-athletes inform our recommendations that the NCAA standardize data collection and more systematically track and ensure gender equity in the items provided at the championships. *See pp. 24-25.*

Based on our review, it generally appears that the NCAA provides equitable awards and mementos for championships other than basketball. Stakeholders did not raise concerns about this issue during our review, and we confirmed numerous examples of the NCAA providing equitable awards and mementos. We attribute this to the NCAA's uniform system of distributing gifts through the online gift suite and to the fact that additional gifts (*e.g.*, hats, t-shirts, mini-trophies, and participant medallions) are distributed to both men's and women's teams. The one notable exception to this is the most outstanding player trophy provided at the Division I men's baseball championship. *See pp. 68-69.*

In addition to these awards and mementos provided by the NCAA, equipment suppliers and corporate sponsors sometimes provide additional free equipment and "swag." These gifts, which "var[y] by championship/equipment supplier agreement," are not reflected in the NCAA's budget, as they are provided as value-in-kind and not purchased by the NCAA. The NCAA does not comprehensively track or audit these gifts either, so it is unclear which gifts and equipment a championship will receive in any given year. For example, multiple stakeholders noted that "men's [lacrosse] get[s] more items from STX" and, as discussed above, it was only after the NCAA's internal gender equity review this year that the NCAA recognized this disparity and worked to resolve it.

Some corporate sponsors activate equally—or at least are supposed to activate equally—across championships. For example, one Corporate Partner and CBS/Turner have an agreement to place products in locker rooms at NCAA championships. The agreement specifically stipulates: “All locker room product placement *subject to gender equity requirements* (e.g., if [the Partner] provides product for men’s soccer, it will also provide product for women’s soccer), and subject to NCAA/venue approval.” This kind of gender equity provision in sponsor contracts should be an NCAA standard. (We were unable to obtain any proof that it is.) But even with this provision, we were told by the NCAA that while the Partner placed product in locker rooms at the men’s and women’s lacrosse, soccer, and basketball championships, as well as baseball, softball, and men’s wrestling, it also placed product in locker rooms for only women’s volleyball and men’s ice hockey but not their gender counterparts.

**Participation opportunities.** Overall, the number of participation opportunities for men and women across all NCAA championships appear to be relatively equitable. In 2019, there were 9,743 opportunities for men, 10,401 for women, and 340 joint opportunities in Division I and NC sports other than basketball. While the overall numbers are similar, participation opportunities within a sport may differ between men and women. For example, swimming and diving coaches and administrators noted “the glaring disparity in access between male and female participants.” Division I men currently have 270 swimmers and divers in the championship, whereas Division I women currently have 322.

But raw participation numbers only tell part of the story due to differences in sponsorship at the campus level. Indeed, there are far more schools sponsoring women’s swimming and diving than men’s, so even though there are currently more participation opportunities for women student-athletes in the Division I championship, a higher percentage of Division I male swimmers and divers are currently able to participate in the championship. *See* p. 100. These “access ratios”—that is, the number of championship participation opportunities relative to the number of total student-athletes in a sport—are significantly different for men and women in some sports. *See* pp. 77 (ice hockey), 89 (volleyball), 91-92 (gymnastics).

Accordingly, championship bracket and field sizes do not need to be the same between all men’s and women’s championships to ensure gender equity. Rather, a variety of factors influence whether a bracket or field size disparity may be appropriate, including the number of schools that sponsor a sport and the relative competitiveness of the broader field of players. Based on a detailed review of these and other variables in the context of the Division I basketball championships, our Phase I report recommended that the women’s bracket be expanded from 64 to 68 teams. But even there, we noted a number of considerations that could caution against bracket expansion.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, squad, bench, and travel party sizes can also impact the student-athlete experience.<sup>89</sup> For example, a number of stakeholders raised concerns about the different travel

<sup>88</sup> *See* Phase I Report, Recommendation 5.

<sup>89</sup> Squad size refers to the maximum number of student-athletes per team allowed to dress in uniform and play at the championship; bench size is the number of people, including student-athletes, per team who are allowed to sit on the bench, even if they are not



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

party and bench sizes for women's lacrosse as compared to men's lacrosse. Only after the NCAA's internal gender equity review earlier this year was this issue identified and rectified by equalizing the travel party size (and with plans to equalize the bench size as well). *See* pp. 83-85. There are similar disparities in the bench and squad sizes for baseball and softball: baseball gets more members in their squad size, and more baseball student-athletes are allowed to attend the championship but not wear their uniform or play in the game. *See* pp. 67-68.

A number of considerations may impact the appropriate bracket, squad, bench, and travel party size for each championship. But when a sport reaches a point where an expansion of any one of these elements would provide for a more equitable student-athlete experience, the NCAA should have a clear and transparent process for considering and approving such requests that takes gender equity into account.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, due to the impact on gender equity and the student-athlete experience, combined with the budgetary and other resource implications, the NCAA should be more actively monitoring and preparing for such changes in its championships going forward.

The NCAA has recognized this as an issue. In 2020, the Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group recommended—and the Division I Council has approved—“principles,” but no process, to guide “future decisions regarding championship bracket/field size,” including consideration of the “[i]mpact on gender equity,” as well as principles and a process to guide and manage future requests regarding “squad, travel party, or bench size.”<sup>91</sup> Those recommendations were approved by the Division I Board of Directors Finance Committee on October 26, 2020, and the decision was ratified by the Board of Directors. The recommendations took effect on August 1, 2021.

Yet, the NCAA has not fully addressed the issue. The recently approved process for requests relating to squad, travel party, and bench size is not sufficiently detailed and does not provide for transparency into decision-making.<sup>92</sup> And the NCAA has not adopted (nor did the Championships Finance Review Working Group recommend) a process for bracket/field expansion requests.<sup>93</sup> Recently, for example, the NC Women's Ice Hockey Committee requested a bracket expansion from eight to 10 teams. In September 2021, the Competition Oversight Committee noted that “[w]hile the committee supports the merits of the proposal . . . it agreed to

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permitted to dress and play; and travel party size is the total number of people per team for whom the NCAA provides travel reimbursement and per diem.

<sup>90</sup> While this report comments on expansion of brackets, we recognize that reducing the size of a bracket can also involve a lengthy NCAA governance process. *See* NCAA Constitution, Article 4.01.2.3.1 Championship Access (“Members are guaranteed access to national championships (including the play-in structure in certain championships, sizes of championship fields and the number and ratio of automatic qualifying conferences) at least at the level provided as of August 1, 2014.”).

<sup>91</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Council (Oct. 13-14, 2020); Report of the NCAA Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group at 4 (Oct. 7, 2020).

<sup>92</sup> Supplement No. 6, NCAA Division I Board of Directors Finance Committee (Apr. 2021).

<sup>93</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group at 2-4 (Oct. 7, 2020); Supplement No. 6, NCAA Division I Board of Directors Finance Committee (Apr. 2021).

table the matter until the next opportunity to fund it.”<sup>94</sup> Stakeholders reported that after submitting their request, the Women’s Ice Hockey Committee was told that they had missed a deadline of which they were not aware. And though their proposal was tabled, they were also told unofficially that they could have asked for an even larger bracket expansion. As those who worked on the proposal described it, “our committee spent an extraordinary amount of time trying to figure out how to get things submitted to [the Competition Oversight Committee],” but found there is “no clear path.”

In October 2021, the Competition Oversight Committee announced its own desire to “engage in a more holistic review of all team-sport squad, travel party and bench sizes rather than address[ing] them as one-off requests,” noting that such a review was consistent with the recommendations that the Championships Finance Review Working Group had made.<sup>95</sup> The Competition Oversight Committee’s team and individual sport subcommittees have taken the issue under review.

## 2. Recommendations

### Recommendation C.1

Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at all championships are gender-equitable.

The NCAA should develop a defined set of items directly impacting the student-athlete championship experience that should be substantially the same at championships going forward. This list of items should be developed by NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity, in consultation with staff responsible for planning and executing the championships. The list of items should parallel the list that we recommended the NCAA create for the men’s and women’s basketball championships.<sup>96</sup>

As we identified in Phase I, and as we reemphasize now after reviewing the other NCAA championships, at a minimum, the following principles should apply:

- **Health and safety.** Anything that falls within the broad category of health and safety should be substantially the same.
- **Practice facilities and locker rooms.** Understanding that there may be some differences based on the particular location of an event, the size, quality, and proximity of practice facilities and locker rooms should be substantially the same.

<sup>94</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee (Sept. 8, 2021).

<sup>95</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee (Oct. 4, 2021).

<sup>96</sup> See Phase I Report, Recommendation 3.2.



- ***Travel and accommodations.*** The type (bus versus plane, charter versus commercial, etc.) and quality of transportation to championships should be substantially the same, as should the degree to which travel considerations are permitted to impact the brackets. Once at the championships, transportation should also be of a substantially similar quality. Hotels should be of the same quality with substantially similar amenities and located a similar distance from playing venues. To the extent feasible, travel and accommodations should be booked at the same time for the championships, and efforts should otherwise be made to ensure that the men and the women have similar access to limited travel and hotel options so that the best options can be maximized for all teams going to the championships. The food provided at the championships should also be of a substantially similar quality, quantity, and variety.
- ***Awards, gifts, mementos, and other amenities.*** Any awards, gifts, mementos, “swag,” or amenities given to student-athletes or their families at the men’s and women’s tournaments should be substantially the same.
- ***Signage, marketing, promotional efforts, and branding.*** The quality and quantity of signage, marketing, promotional efforts, and branding should be substantially the same. This should include the same opportunity for signage and branding on any team buses and in game facilities, locker rooms, hotels, and public spaces throughout the tournament locale. We recognize that the NCAA has commissioned a branding and marketing study, in which they are seeking to explore whether the brands for all championships are equitable and marketable. That study is ongoing, and its results should inform how the NCAA implements this Recommendation.
- ***Entertainment.*** Any entertainment or other recreational activities made available to student-athletes, their families, and their fans should be substantially the same.

Once developed, the list should be reviewed and updated regularly in order to reflect the current state of the championships and should be modified alongside the list created for the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. Of course, developing the list is just the first step. The Championships and other NCAA staff, as well as the Competition Oversight Committee, the Division II and III Championships Committees, and the sports committees, should all use the list both in planning and administering the championships each year, as well as in conducting any real time or after-the-fact audits to ensure that the men’s and women’s championship for each sport are equitable, and that sports without a gender counterpart also maintain a comparable student-athlete experience.

**Recommendation C.2**

Create a transparent process for reviewing proposals to increase the size of a championship's bracket/field, squad, bench, or travel party size that takes gender equity into account.

Building on the principles and process recommended by the Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group to guide decisions regarding modifications to bracket/field, squad, bench or travel party size,<sup>97</sup> the Competition Oversight Committee should develop a transparent process for holistically considering and approving requests from sport committees to expand their brackets/fields and to increase or modify the individuals included in the squad, travel party, and bench sizes that takes gender equity into account. Using the guidance and principles of the Championships Finance Review Working Group—which included an eye toward gender equity—the Competition Oversight Committee should develop a detailed process for evaluating any such requests and should provide detailed information to each sport committee on that process, including how to submit a request, any applicable deadlines, the factors used for review, and all steps of the review and approval process. If a request is submitted and denied, the Competition Oversight Committee should provide the sport committee with an explanation of why the request was denied and, if solely budgetary, an estimated date of when the request is likely to be approved in the future. In order to inform this process, the Competition Oversight Committee should create a system for monitoring and planning for changes in the number of student-athletes participating in the championships.

<sup>97</sup> See Report of the NCAA Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group (Oct. 7, 2020); NCAA Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group: Recommendations to the NCAA Division I Council (Oct. 2020); NCAA Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group: Briefing Document/Concepts for Membership Consideration and Feedback (Spring 2020).



## CHAMPIONSHIP & COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

There is broad support among NCAA leadership, staff, and committee members for the principle of treating student-athletes equitably with respect to gender. Despite these good intentions, however, numerous championships provide inequitable experiences for their student-athletes. This often results, at least in part, from the fact that men's and women's championships operate in "silos," independently from each other, with little strategic coordination, communication, or common purpose. Conversely, in sports in which the NCAA provides a more gender equitable championship experience for student-athletes, there is generally less "silo-ing" of operations and more communication and coordination in championship planning.

Not surprisingly, then, our review of sports other than basketball has identified two structural configurations that contribute to increased equity in the championship experience of male and female student-athletes: a combined—or, at a minimum, well-coordinated—sport committee; and a combined (in some way) championship for men and women. Importantly, however, our review showed that these are not "one-size-fits-all" solutions; rather, they must be carefully and thoughtfully calibrated to the unique characteristics and needs of the championship and its student-athletes.

### 1. Joint or Coordinated Committees

*Division I and NC championships committee structure.* Each NCAA championship is administered by a sport committee comprised of representatives from the NCAA's member institutions or conferences and, as discussed above, by NCAA Championships staff.<sup>98</sup> The NCAA staff are responsible for the day-to-day planning and operations of the championship, whereas the sport committee has general oversight of the championship, including revising and reviewing championship policies and procedures, reviewing and selecting host sites for future championships, and participating in the selection of teams and individuals for the championship.<sup>99</sup>

The sport committees for Division I and NC championships (except football and basketball) all report up to the Division I Competition Oversight Committee.<sup>100</sup> The Competition Oversight Committee reviews recommendations from the sport committees and oversees regular season and championship administration in sports other than football and basketball, including

<sup>98</sup> NCAA Sports & Playing Rules Committee Rosters, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/ncaa-sports-playing-rules-committee-rosters>; Committees, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/committees>.

<sup>99</sup> See, e.g., 2020 Division I Swimming & Diving Championships: Committee Operations Manual at 5, 9; 2020 Division III Women's Ice Hockey Championship Committee Operations Manual at 5, 9.

<sup>100</sup> Division I Competition Oversight Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 17, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/ncaa-division-i-competition-oversight-committee>. For a discussion of Divisions II and III, see below at pp. 115-120.

supervising qualification and selection procedures for the championships.<sup>101</sup> According to the NCAA, the Competition Oversight Committee “will prioritize enhancement of the student-athlete educational experience (academically and athletically) and, in doing so, promote student-athletes’ personal growth and leadership development.”<sup>102</sup>

In this capacity, the Competition Oversight Committee must review and approve some of the sport committees’ more significant recommendations concerning championship structure, including proposed changes to bracket and field size and rest days. For example, following the events at this year’s Division I basketball championships, the Competition Oversight Committee approved an expansion of the Division I Women’s Golf Championship from four regional sites to six, and also approved additional rest days for Division I men’s ice hockey, NC women’s gymnastics, Division I softball, and Division I women’s volleyball.<sup>103</sup> The Competition Oversight Committee also weighs in on how annual increases to the Division I and NC budgets should be allocated across the championships. See pp. 19-20.

While there is no formal process for ensuring coordination between men’s and women’s sports committees, the Competition Oversight Committee has served informally as a sort of gender equity monitor for the Division I championships it oversees. One member reported that the Competition Oversight Committee tries to ensure that the student-athlete experience, particularly with regard to trophies, per diem, travel, and banquets, is as equitable as possible. If the Competition Oversight Committee receives a request from a men’s sport committee, it will reach out to any women’s committee for the same sport and ask if they would like to make a similar request, and vice versa.

***Joint or coordinated sport committees improve gender equity.*** The sport committees differ in structure and composition across NCAA championships. For most of the Division I and NC sports, the men’s and women’s championships are managed by separate committees. However, several Division I and NC sports have joint men’s and women’s sport committees, including cross-country, fencing, indoor track and field, outdoor track and field, rifle, skiing, swimming and diving, and tennis.<sup>104</sup>

The NCAA championships with joint sport committees tend to offer more equitable experiences for men and women student-athletes. For example, one stakeholder noted that in the track and field and cross country championships, there are “no championship differences between men and women at the Division I level.” An NCAA staff member opined, “There really are no

<sup>101</sup> Division I Competition Oversight Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/ncaa-division-i-competition-oversight-committee>.

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee Sept. 8, 2021 Videoconference at 3-4.

<sup>104</sup> NCAA Sports & Playing Rules Committee Rosters, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/ncaa-sports-playing-rules-committee-rosters>. While both soccer and ice hockey have separate men’s and women’s sport committees, they have joint men’s and women’s rules committees that determine what rules will govern the individual championships.



disparities at the NCAA Skiing Championships between men and women as virtually everything is the same.”

Not surprisingly, the joint committee structure helps to advance gender equity by facilitating communication and collaboration in the planning and execution of like-sport championships. As one tennis stakeholder noted, “There’s much more communication in tennis” between men’s and women’s tennis stakeholders “simply because of how the committee works.” This model is particularly successful when the joint sport committee is equally comprised of representatives of men’s interests and women’s interests. For example, as discussed in the tennis case study, *see* p. 95, the Division I Tennis Committee is divided evenly between representatives of women’s and men’s tennis interests, even rotating the committee chair position annually between the two groups. This careful balancing ensures that both men’s and women’s representatives have an equal say in championship planning decisions.

Most sports with joint committees also have championship structures that contribute to increased gender equity, including joint men’s and women’s championships (as is the case in cross country, tennis, and track and field), or championships in which men and women student-athletes compete together (as is the case in fencing, rifle, and skiing). *See* pp. 53-56. But this is not universally the case. In swimming and diving, which has a joint committee but not a joint championship (although it sometimes holds co-located championships), one stakeholder commented that “[s]wimming and diving benefit from having a shared committee structure,” which “ensures consistency and fairness between the two championships.” Another stakeholder reported that it is the committee structure that “allows for the championships to be so similar.”

Some sports with separate committees—and even separate championships—achieve similar benefits if the committees are collaborative and coordinated. As described in the case study for golf below, *see* pp. 107-08, while still having some challenges to resolve, the men’s and women’s championships are largely equitable in comparison to each other, which is attributable (at least in part) to the fact that their men’s and women’s committees make an effort to communicate and coordinate with one another while planning their championships.

Despite these benefits to the student-athlete experience, the NCAA does not require men’s and women’s sport committees to communicate or collaborate, and has not created systems, processes, or standards to govern such coordination. As a result, the degree of communication and coordination between committees varies significantly by sport and, not surprisingly, is very low in those sports with some of the greatest gender disparities in student-athlete experience, such as ice hockey and lacrosse. *See* pp. 75, 83.

## 2. Combined Championships

In our Phase I report, we recommended that the NCAA hold a combined Division I Men’s and Women’s Final Four in order to ensure that the student-athlete experience at the Division I

Men's and Women's Basketball Championships is more equitable.<sup>105</sup> In other NCAA sports, this championship configuration has already been well tested, with highly favorable results. Combining at least some portion of the men's and women's championships for a given sport enables more coordinated planning, increases equity in the goods, services, facilities, and resources provided at the championships, and eliminates or reduces disparities between the "look and feel" of the tournaments, including as a result of combining corporate sponsorships and promotions.

Combined championships can and do take several forms. Some sports, like track and field and cross country, hold their entire men's and women's championships on the same days in the same location. Others, like tennis, hold only certain rounds of the men's and women's tournaments together. Still others, like golf, swimming and diving, and water polo, hold the men's and women's tournaments in the same location (at least in certain years) but on staggered dates, which allows for better-coordinated, but still separate, championship events. And a few sports—fencing, rifle, and skiing—hold a single co-educational championship in which men and women compete either against each other or against their same gender with team scores reflecting performance in both male and female events.

***Joint championships.*** Division I indoor and outdoor track and field, as well as cross country, all hold joint men's and women's championships, in which the men's and women's championships take place entirely at the same place and time. Division I cross country holds joint men's and women's regionals on the same day across nine regional campus sites, and a joint men's and women's final on one day at a single campus site.<sup>106</sup> Stakeholders and NCAA staff described the length of the races as the most significant difference between these championships. For example, in Division I cross country, the men run 10 kilometers at the championship while women run six kilometers. Although the subject has been debated amongst those who oversee and participate in the tournament, we were told that "most seem to support the varying distances."

Indoor and outdoor track and field occur at different times of the year (March for indoor, May or June for outdoor), but are structured similarly. Both hold the Division I men's and women's championships at the same site and in the same three-day time window.<sup>107</sup> As a result, all student-athletes experience the same venues, championship branding, and tournament look and feel. The result is a largely identical student-athlete experience.

***Partially joint championships.*** Some sports hold only certain rounds of the men's and women's championships at the same place and time, with other (usually earlier) rounds taking place separately. For example, since 2006, the NCAA has held the Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championships together, at the same time and location. The men's and women's championships are structured identically, comprised of a team-based single-elimination tournament and a singles and doubles tournament. All rounds of the singles and doubles

<sup>105</sup> Phase I Report, Recommendation 3.1.

<sup>106</sup> 2020 Division I Cross Country Championships Pre-Championships Manual at 11.

<sup>107</sup> NCAA 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field Outdoor Championships Technical Manual at 4; NCAA 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field Indoor Technical Manual at 5.



tournament are played at a shared site, and the final rounds of the men's and women's teams matches are played there as well.<sup>108</sup> Tennis stakeholders report few if any gender disparities at the tournament, and one said that the combined championship structure “effectively ended any gender equity problems.”

In 2021, for the first time, the Division I Men's and Women's Soccer Championships held their semi-final and final rounds, known as the College Cups, jointly in a single location, with earlier rounds played separately throughout North Carolina. Stakeholders reported that combining the College Cups provided a “phenomenal” experience and “highlight[ed] the ability to create and reimagine a new tournament format.” In the past, the Division I Men's and Women's Soccer Championships were offset by one week and were held in different locations, but in 2022 they will again be held in the same location (Cary, North Carolina). Notably, stakeholders report that soccer holds a gender equitable tournament regardless of which format it uses.

***Co-located championships.*** Some sports hold the men's and women's championships either entirely or partially in the same location, but do so on different dates. The finals of the Division I Men's and Women's Golf Championships, for example, are held at the same site on back-to-back weeks, rotating which gender competes first each year.<sup>109</sup> Golf serves as a useful example of how sharing a venue, even when the championships are held at different times, can provide similar gender equity benefits to championships held simultaneously. The NCAA began holding the Division I men's and women's finals at the same course during consecutive weeks in 2015. Division I golf uses the same hotels and lodging and works to ensure consistency in the look and feel of the venue for both genders. Although the experience is not identical, stakeholders reported that the championships are “pretty equitable” and that they “d[id] not notice a difference between” the men's and women's championships. *See pp. 104-06.*

NC water polo sometimes holds its men's and women's championships at the same site, though always at different times of the year.<sup>110</sup> Stakeholders and NCAA staff reported “comparable experiences” at the men's and women's water polo championships in general and said “there are no differences . . . in terms of venues, look and feel.” Additionally, the NCAA staff assigned to water polo coordinate both championships; this cross-pollination makes it easier to identify and correct any gender disparities.

***Co-educational championships.*** A handful of sports—including fencing, rifle, and skiing—hold a truly combined tournament: men and women student-athletes compete together

<sup>108</sup> *See* 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Pre-Championships Manual. Earlier rounds of the men's and women's teams matches are played at campus sites, with higher seeded teams earning the right to host; if the men's and women's team at an institution are both seeded high enough to host an early round match, they may hold a combined regional.

<sup>109</sup> *Compare* 2020 Division I Women's Golf Championships Pre-Championship Manual at 11, *with* 2021 Division I Men's Golf Championships Pre-Championship Manual at 11.

<sup>110</sup> *Compare* 2021 Men's National Collegiate Water Polo Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 8-9, *with* 2021 Women's National Collegiate Water Polo Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 8-9.

(although not always against each other) at the same time and place. These sports generally report virtually identical student-athlete experiences for men and women.

Although stakeholders and NCAA staff reported that men and women have an equitable experience at the fencing tournament, they also identified an inequity that is *caused* by holding a co-ed championship. Numerous schools sponsor a women-only fencing team. Although those teams may compete, they cannot win the national NCAA title, because the team champion is determined by combining the men's and women's points from a given school, and the entry rules limit the number of student-athletes of each gender who can participate per school and per region. There are no men-only teams, meaning that no men are prevented from winning the NCAA championship title by these rules. Some stakeholders have proposed that the championship award prizes for the winning men's squad and women's squad, either instead of or in addition to the single team prize, in order to give all women fencers an opportunity to win a title. The NCAA Fencing Committee has discussed whether to propose this change, and the issue remains under its consideration.

Some skiing stakeholders raised concerns about the different distances that men and women ski in the Nordic skiing events. In Nordic skiing, women race five kilometers on the first day of the championships, while men race 10 kilometers; on the second day women race 15 kilometers, while the men race 20. Some stakeholders have expressed a desire to see men and women ski the same distances, noting that maintaining different distances is "outdated" and "perpetuat[es] the myth that women are less capable" than men. In the spring of 2021, a group of current and former student-athletes and coaches submitted a proposal for equal distance races to the NCAA Ski Committee. The committee voted on the proposal in June 2021 and decided not to change this format for the 2022 championship. Stakeholders reported that the committee was conceptually in favor of the proposal, but not prepared to make the necessary change at this time, explaining that the "best course of action would be to encourage every region to do it for at least one competition this winter (if not more)" in regular season in order to "make sure the student-athletes are on board with the change."

***Separate championships.*** Many sports hold entirely separate men's and women's championships in different locations, overseen by separate committees and coordinated by different staff. These championships tend to see the greatest gender disparities in the student-athlete experience. For example, the Division I Baseball and Softball Championships are held in separate locations each year and see some of the largest disparities among NCAA sports, including significant differences in venue facilities. *See* pp. 62-64. The Division I Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championships similarly see significant disparities in the student-athlete experience, resulting from, among other things, the use of different venues. *See* pp. 78-79. There are also notable disparities between the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship and the NC Women's Ice Hockey Championship. *See* pp. 72-73. All of these championships would benefit from improved communication between the men's and women's sport committees and staff, and some may be good candidates for some form of combined championship that would help to make the student-athlete experience more equitable.



\* \* \*

Although there are significant benefits to combining (in some way) the men's and women's championship for a sport, it is not the only way for a sport to provide an equitable student-athlete experience. Some sports have held largely equitable, but separate, championships, like soccer did until this year. Nor is it an ideal solution for all sports: baseball and softball, for example, have long-term relationships and contractual agreements with their respective host cities—Omaha and Oklahoma City, respectively—and combining those championships would undermine the significant (if currently inequitable) benefit both baseball and softball accrue from having long-term, dedicated venues. And, in some circumstances, albeit unusual ones, a combined championship may undermine the goal of gender equity: at least one sport, fencing, has considered separating its championships to improve the student-athlete experience for female competitors.

### 3. Recommendations

#### Recommendation D.1

Conduct an assessment and develop a plan for combining or co-locating men's and women's championships where appropriate.

Many NCAA sports have successfully combined some or all of their men's and women's championships, or at least held them on staggered dates at the same venue, showing that doing so can achieve gender equity in the student-athlete experience while creating significant efficiencies and cost-savings for the NCAA. Such "combined" championships present a highly effective way to immediately address some of the key drivers of a gender-inequitable student-athlete experience, including, among other things, differences in venues, facilities, signage, sponsorship, and fan festivals and entertainment.

In our Phase I report, we concluded that, because of the structure of the NCAA's existing broadcast and sponsorship contracts, holding a joint Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Final Four in one location over a single weekend would be the best, and likely the only, way to reduce the existing gender inequities seen in Division I men's and women's basketball.<sup>111</sup> This may not be true for all sports, but we believe that it is likely to be helpful for many sports, as evidenced by those NCAA championships that are already combined in some way. We therefore recommend that the NCAA engage in a systematic evaluation of each of its Division I championships that are offered for both men and women but are not already combined—including gymnastics, ice hockey, and lacrosse<sup>112</sup>—to determine whether doing so would meaningfully

<sup>111</sup> See Phase I Report, Recommendation 3.1.

<sup>112</sup> In 2025 and 2026, the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship is already scheduled to join the Divisions I, II, and III joint men's championship at a single venue. See pp. 78-79. Because men's and women's volleyball are currently played in different seasons, combining championships would pose significant logistical challenges. This factor—which is among the ones we list below—may counsel strongly against combining these championships. Similarly, baseball and softball would likely be difficult to

enhance gender equity, and otherwise be appropriate and effective, and, if so, to develop a plan for how to best combine those championships (partially or fully, back-to-back or joint, etc.). The NCAA should also evaluate whether those of its championships that are combined in some way—including soccer, swimming and diving, and water polo—could or should be combined more fully. In making this determination, the NCAA should consider, at a minimum:

- Whether combining in some way the men's and women's championships will improve promotion and corporate sponsor opportunities that will help grow the sport and provide a better student-athlete experience overall;
- Whether combining in some way the men's and women's championships will improve gender equity based on the list of factors set forth in Recommendation C.1;
- The degree to which combining in some way the men's and women's championships poses logistical or budgetary challenges and whether those challenges outweigh any anticipated gender equity benefits; and
- Whether there are unique benefits derived from maintaining separate men's and women's championships that outweigh any gender equity benefits that could be achieved by combining the championships.

These assessments should be performed by the SVP of Championships and the NCAA staff responsible for coordinating each championship under review, in consultation with the relevant sport committee as well as staff who have expertise in Title IX and gender equity issues. The relevant sport committees should submit their recommendations, with a detailed explanation of the basis for their conclusions, to the Division I Competition Oversight Committee, which will make the final decision for each sport based on the considerations listed above. This process should be completed prior to the fall of 2022. With respect to Divisions II and III, the Championships Committees should analyze whether a similar review process should be performed for their respective championships. Any such Division II or III process should be completed prior to the summer of 2023.

## Recommendation D.2

For non-joint committees, establish regular communications between the men's and women's sport committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.

In our Phase I report, we recommended that the NCAA establish regular communications between the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Committees and Basketball Oversight

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combine, in light of differences between the sports themselves and in light of their lengthy contractual relationships with their respective host cities.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

Committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.<sup>113</sup> This recommendation is equally applicable to other sports without open and functional lines of communication between their men's and women's sport committees. There can be no question that improved communication and collaboration between the men's and women's committees for a given sport will promote joint decision-making and management and help ensure gender equity in championships. The NCAA should therefore require that for non-joint committees, the chairs of the men's and women's committees for each sport regularly communicate with their counterparts in order to coordinate on strategic decisions and to work together on achieving gender equity for student-athletes at their championships. Similarly, both committees should regularly consider and discuss how best to ensure that the student-athletes have equitable championship experiences.

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<sup>113</sup> See Phase I Report, Recommendation 1.4.

## CASE STUDIES

As part of our Phase II review, we looked more closely at several Division I and NC championships to explore the issues impacting gender equity and the student-athlete experience that have arisen during both phases of our review, including: the NCAA's organizational structure and culture of prioritizing revenue-producing sports; the NCAA's media agreements and sponsor relationships; the communication and collaboration of NCAA committees and staff; and the configuration of the championships themselves. We selected a cross-section of sports that illustrate how these issues and themes affect NCAA championships with different characteristics, such as championships where the men's event has a larger fanbase and is better resourced than the women's, championships where the women's event has a larger fanbase and is better resourced than the men's, championships that are equitably resourced, joint championships, back-to-back championships at the same venue, and championships overseen by joint committees. The nine case studies below—baseball and softball, ice hockey, lacrosse, volleyball, gymnastics, tennis, swimming and diving, soccer, and golf—provide further context for the recommendations in this report.

### 1. Baseball & Softball

On April 23, 2021, about six weeks before the final rounds of the Division I baseball and softball championships, known as the Men's and Women's College World Series,<sup>114</sup> the Washington Post published an article detailing the historical inequities between these two events.<sup>115</sup> The softball stadium was roughly half the capacity of the baseball stadium and lacked the same basic amenities—such as showers in the locker rooms. And until 2014, softball players had to use porta-potties because their dugouts lacked bathrooms. Such blatant disparities were particularly notable given the growing popularity of the softball championship; the Division I baseball and softball championships are now both drawing sellout crowds and similar viewership on ESPN.<sup>116</sup>

At the time, just on the heels of the gender disparities revealed at this year's Division I basketball championships, NCAA staff were in the midst of an effort to identify and remedy similar disparities before this year's Division I baseball and softball championships began. For example, the NCAA identified that Rawlings, the equipment supplier for baseball and softball, had been giving balls, bags, and participant gifts on an inequitable basis. And the NCAA had been ordering

<sup>114</sup> Before advancing to the Men's and Women's College World Series, each of which involve eight teams, 64 baseball and softball teams compete in regional rounds at 16 sites, and super-regional rounds at eight sites. See 2020-21 Division I Women's Softball Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 13; 2021 Division I Baseball Championship Host Operations Manual at 7. This case study focuses principally on the Men's and Women's College World Series, which has received media attention and about which stakeholders have expressed gender equity concerns.

<sup>115</sup> Molly Hensley-Clancy, *College Softball Coaches Decry Treatment by NCAA: 'What's lower than an afterthought?'*, Wash. Post (Apr. 23, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/04/23/ncaa-softball-college-world-series-disparities/>.

<sup>116</sup> *Id.*



commemorative chairs for the baseball tournament, but not the softball tournament, and gifting the chairs to coaches at the end of the tournament.<sup>117</sup>

Although the NCAA took steps to remedy these issues, other substantial disparities remained. On June 4, 2021, after the Men's and Women's College World Series began, the New York Times published a story detailing the continued inequities between the tournaments.<sup>118</sup> It depicted a dramatic contrast between the experience of the baseball players, who were being offered free massages, and the softball players, who instead were playing doubleheaders late into the night.<sup>119</sup>

Our review has confirmed the underpinnings of this vivid picture painted by the media of this year's baseball and softball championships. Division I baseball is better funded, has significantly better facilities and more staff support, and offers more amenities for student-athletes and their fans. These significant differences stem in part from the baseball championship's long and financially rewarding relationship with its host city of Omaha, Nebraska. Both Division I baseball and softball have unique financial arrangements as part of long-term agreements with their respective host cities—Omaha and Oklahoma City, respectively—meant to encourage and fund much needed stadium improvements for both championships. Over time, however, Omaha has put more resources into the relationship as compared to Oklahoma City, resulting in inequities in the student-athlete experience that are perpetuated by these long-term agreements, as well as the NCAA's own inequitable dedication of resources, historical internal reporting structure, and lack of coordination.

**Historical background.** The Division I baseball tournament is one of the oldest collegiate competitions, founded in 1947. Division I baseball's relationship with Omaha dates back more than 70 years, as Omaha began hosting the Men's College World Series (originally called the College World Series, without the gender modifier) in 1950.<sup>120</sup> Since then, Omaha and the NCAA have entered into several long-term agreements to share investment in—and revenue from—the championship.<sup>121</sup> The most recent agreement was signed in June 2008 and is set to expire on October 1, 2036.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>117</sup> *Id.*

<sup>118</sup> David Leonhardt, *Massages for Men, Doubleheaders for Women*, N.Y. Times (June 4, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/04/briefing/college-sports-gender-inequality.html>.

<sup>119</sup> *Id.*

<sup>120</sup> CWS History, College World Series of Omaha, Inc. (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://cwsomaha.com/history/cws-history/>.

<sup>121</sup> Division I Baseball Championship History, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021). The agreement is between the NCAA and CWS, Inc., a private party serving as the official Local Organizing Committee for the Men's College World Series, and references yet another agreement called the Tri-Party Event Agreement between CWS, Inc., the City of Omaha, and the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority ("MECA"), which "will set forth all matters associated with the conduct of the" Men's College World Series, including but not limited to the construction of a new baseball stadium. College World Series Host Agreement between NCAA and College World Series of Omaha, Inc. (June 10, 2008) ("MCWS Host Agreement"). For simplicity and clarity, this report refers to these three parties collectively as "Omaha."

<sup>122</sup> MCWS Host Agreement § 3.1.

Division I softball, on the other hand, did not become an NCAA sport until 1982, the first spring that the NCAA held women's championships.<sup>123</sup> Softball's final rounds, the Women's College World Series, have been hosted in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma since 1990.<sup>124</sup> As in baseball, the NCAA and Oklahoma City have a long-term agreement to share revenue from and expenses for the Women's College World Series, the most recent of which was signed in January 2018 and is set to expire after the championship in 2035.<sup>125</sup>

**Facilities.** Both of these long-term contracts were meant, among other things, to provide the local hosts with the ability to obtain the necessary funding for much needed facilities improvements.<sup>126</sup> Specifically, the 2008 agreement between the NCAA and Omaha required Omaha to construct a new baseball stadium complex specifically for the Men's College World Series.<sup>127</sup> This stadium, which was unveiled in 2011 and is located in downtown Omaha, has been proclaimed the "best non-MLB facility in North America."<sup>128</sup> It has 24,000 seats across three decks of general grandstands, club seating for 2,500, features a 360-degree walk-around concourse with a full view of the field, and 10 concessionaries.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Division I Softball Championship History, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/softball/d1>.

<sup>124</sup> Graham Hays, *How Oklahoma City, Home of the Women's College World Series, Became the Center of the Softball Universe*, ESPN (May 28, 2020), [https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/\\_/id/29224143/how-oklahoma-city-home-women-college-world-series-became-center-softball-universe](https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/29224143/how-oklahoma-city-home-women-college-world-series-became-center-softball-universe). In 1996, the Women's College World Series was played in Georgia at a venue that hosted the Olympics later that year. *Id.*

<sup>125</sup> The NCAA 2018 contract was with the Oklahoma City All Sports Association ("OCASA"). See Women's College World Series Host Agreement between the NCAA and OCASA (Jan. 22, 2018) ("WCWS Host Agreement"). Later that year, however, a change in the financial structure of the organization, as well as some concerns by local city officials about the viability and need for the organization, led to its dissolution. See Steve Lackmeyer, *Dispute Over Revenue Split from Softball Championship Cited in Potential Demise of All Sports Organization*, Oklahoman (Oct. 17, 2018), <https://www.oklahoman.com/article/5611950/dispute-over-revenue-split-from-softball-championship-cited-in-potential-demise-of-all-sports-association>. Today, USA Softball, Inc. has assumed the responsibilities and benefits of OCASA.

<sup>126</sup> See *Contract Keeps CWS Safe in Omaha*, NCAA News Archive (June 10, 2008), <http://ncaanewsarchive.s3.amazonaws.com/2008/division-i/contract-keeps-cws-safe-in-omaha---06-10-08-ncaa-news.html>; *WCWS Stays Put in Oklahoma City*, ESPN (May 29, 2014), [https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/\\_/id/11001562/women-college-world-series-staying-oklahoma](https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/11001562/women-college-world-series-staying-oklahoma); *OKC Hits it Out of the Park with Women's College World Series*, VelocityKC (June 3, 2019), <https://www.velocityokc.com/blog/development/okc-hits-it-out-of-the-park-with-women-s-college-world-series/>.

<sup>127</sup> MCWS Host Agreement, Article 2; see *World Series Stays in Omaha*, N.Y. Times (May 1, 2008), [https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/01/sports/ncaabasketball/01sportsbriefs-WORLDSERIESS\\_BR.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/01/sports/ncaabasketball/01sportsbriefs-WORLDSERIESS_BR.html); *Contract Keeps CWS Safe in Omaha*, NCAA News Archive (June 10, 2008), <http://ncaanewsarchive.s3.amazonaws.com/2008/division-i/contract-keeps-cws-safe-in-omaha---06-10-08-ncaa-news.html>.

<sup>128</sup> TD Ameritrade Park Omaha Information & Maps, College World Series of Omaha, Inc. (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://cwsomaha.com/td-ameritrade-park-omaha-information-maps/>.

<sup>129</sup> *Id.*; Stadium Information, TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <http://www.tdameritradeparkomaha.com/stadium-information/>; Stadium Information, TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <http://www.tdameritradeparkomaha.com/stadium-information/>; TD Ameritrade Park, Omaha, NE, Ballpark Design Associates (last visited Oct. 19, 2021).



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



*Baseball Stadium in Omaha*<sup>130</sup>

In contrast, the stadium used by Division I softball was originally built in 1987 and is home to USA Softball, the United States national softball team. At the beginning of the NCAA's relationship with Oklahoma City in 1990,<sup>131</sup> NCAA staff immediately recognized the stadium's deficiencies. The NCAA did not have any real alternatives, however, because most softball stadiums are too small to accommodate the audiences that the NCAA softball championship attracts. Indeed, despite its many deficiencies, the stadium in Oklahoma City is one of the most developed softball complexes in the nation.<sup>132</sup>



*Softball Stadium in Oklahoma City*<sup>133</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>131</sup> See *WCWS Stays Put in Oklahoma City*, ESPN (May 29, 2014), [https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/\\_/id/11001562/women-college-world-series-staying-oklahoma](https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/11001562/women-college-world-series-staying-oklahoma).

<sup>132</sup> USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex, Team USA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/usa-softball-hall-of-fame-complex>.

<sup>133</sup> Image from the NCAA.

Beginning in 2011, in connection with the NCAA-Oklahoma City relationship and with the NCAA staff's encouragement, significant improvements were made to the stadium complex in Oklahoma City, including:

- Construction of a dedicated ESPN compound (completed in 2013);
- Rebuilding of the stadium seating area above the dugouts; improvements to the dugouts (including the addition of bathrooms), tunnels, handicap plaza, team rooms, lockers, training rooms, and food service equipment for concessions (completed in 2014);
- Construction of a stand-alone, 5,000 square foot hospitality building, and remodeling of the previously existing hospitality area for the media (completed in 2015); and
- Expansions to the concourse, concession, field lighting, media areas, and seating areas, including 4,000 new stadium seats (completed in 2020).<sup>134</sup>

Notwithstanding all of these improvements, the softball stadium in Oklahoma City still lacks basic amenities present at the baseball stadium in Omaha, including an indoor batting cage, a padded fence, and showers in the locker rooms. It also has 11,000 fewer seats.

**Host financial contributions.** Division I baseball's and softball's host agreements with Omaha and Oklahoma City, respectively, are unique among the NCAA's championships. In addition to providing for the above-described facilities, they provide for a "waterfall" financial structure whereby each host and the NCAA split revenue and expenses.<sup>135</sup> In this waterfall, the total revenue from the championship is collected and used to pay for tournament expenses, including the debt incurred from building or renovating the stadiums, and then the remaining revenue is split between the NCAA and the hosts.<sup>136</sup>

Specifically, under the baseball contract, the NCAA receives a yearly guaranteed payout after the waterfall is completed<sup>137</sup> and a split of any remaining profits.<sup>138</sup> In 2019, for example, the NCAA received a \$13,857,011 net distribution from the Men's College World Series, and in 2021, received a \$17,176,974 net distribution.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Graham Hays, *How Oklahoma City, Home of the Women's College World Series, Became the Center of the Softball Universe*, ESPN (May 28, 2020), [https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/\\_/id/29224143/how-oklahoma-city-home-women-college-world-series-became-center-softball-universe](https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/29224143/how-oklahoma-city-home-women-college-world-series-became-center-softball-universe); WCWS Host Agreement, Ex. B.

<sup>135</sup> MCWS Host Agreement, Article 7; WCWS Host Agreement § 4.

<sup>136</sup> MCWS Host Agreement § 7.5; WCWS Host Agreement § 4.

<sup>137</sup> Karen Sloan, *College World Series Contract Now Stretches 25 Years*, Kearney Hub (July 24, 2008), [https://kearneyhub.com/sports/area/college-world-series-contract-now-stretches-25-years/article\\_7103e489-0737-53fc-a9ca-42b95a8482f1.html](https://kearneyhub.com/sports/area/college-world-series-contract-now-stretches-25-years/article_7103e489-0737-53fc-a9ca-42b95a8482f1.html).

<sup>138</sup> MCWS Host Agreement §§ 7.9, 7.10 & Ex. G.

<sup>139</sup> NCAA Men's College World Series, Independent Accountant's Report on Application of Agreed-Upon Procedures, 2019.



While the Women's College World Series agreement has a similar waterfall, the numbers are substantially smaller.<sup>140</sup> In 2019, the NCAA received a \$1,209,796 net distribution from the Women's College World Series, and in 2021, received a \$2,329,787 net distribution.<sup>141</sup>

**NCAA spending.** Driven by the significantly higher revenue that the baseball championship produces, the result of these long-term agreements is that the NCAA makes a substantially larger investment on an annual basis in the Division I Baseball Championship than in the Division I Softball Championship.<sup>142</sup> Any shortfall in host financial support for the Division I Softball Championship is not made up, but rather augmented, by the NCAA's own spending on the two championships. In 2019, the NCAA spent \$16,036,861 on the Division I Baseball Championship, as compared to \$6,361,695 on the Division I Softball Championship, including awards and mementos, apparel, equipment, travel, per diem for each of the student-athletes, personnel, costs (but not salaries), signage, and expenses related to the sports committees, among other things.<sup>143</sup> This nearly \$10 million difference—more than the budgetary or spending difference between men's and women's championships in any other sport except Division I basketball—is substantial, even considering the increased costs related to managing an event, like baseball, that attracts significantly more fans and has a larger travel party size than softball. When calculated on a per-athlete basis, in 2019, the NCAA spent approximately \$9,281 per student-athlete at the baseball tournament, and only \$4,970 per student-athlete at the softball tournament.

**Historical reporting structure.** Until recently, the NCAA's prioritization of baseball over softball was also reflected in the NCAA's internal reporting structure. Today, Division I baseball—like the other 83 sports besides men's and women's basketball—is managed by a championship manager who reports to the SVP of Championships. But up until 2018, Division I baseball had its own Vice President who reported directly to either the Executive Vice President or SVP of Championships, depending on the point in time, and, importantly, not through the leadership to whom the championship manager for Division I softball (or most other championships) reported. As a result, for many years, the reporting structure for Division I baseball was more akin to Division I basketball and FCS football than it was to softball, lending itself to more silo-ing and a lack of sufficient communication and coordination between the two staffs. More recently, due at least in part to the change in reporting structure, coordination and communication between the two championship managers has increased. Nevertheless, some coaches cited the NCAA's staffing of the tournaments as something the NCAA should consider as it seeks to address gender equity issues moving forward.

**Staffing.** Division I baseball has more NCAA staff and staff time devoted to its championship than Division I softball. Baseball has three championship managers who assist with the operations side of the championship, and another approximately 13 NCAA staff who assist

<sup>140</sup> WCWS Host Agreement § 4.

<sup>141</sup> Division I Women's Softball Proposed Budget and Financial Report (2019).

<sup>142</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>143</sup> *Id.*

with other elements of the tournament, including marketing and ticketing, fan engagement, media and statistics, branding, corporate relations, social and digital media, broadcast, and community engagement. The softball tournament only has two championship managers charged with managing operations, and another 12 staff members who assist with the other elements of the tournament. Even though there are a similar number of staff members assisting with each championship, the time spent on the baseball tournament is the equivalent of 5.08 FTEs, but only 3.51 FTEs for the softball championship.<sup>144</sup> Notably, this is an improvement from prior years, when the softball championship only had one championship manager running the event with some onsite help from two or three contractors.<sup>145</sup>

***Student-athlete experience.*** As this year's championships showed, student-athletes participating in the Men's College World Series have had a significantly different experience than those participating in the Women's College World Series. In addition to the differences in the facilities already discussed above, there are a number of other gender inequities between the two championships, including the schedule, travel party and squad size, equipment, awards and gifts, hotels and transportation, branding, and fan festivals.

**Schedule.** Up to and including this year's championship, softball teams who made it to the finals had to play nine games in seven days, whereas the baseball teams who made it to the finals had to play the same number of games in 11 days.<sup>146</sup> The abbreviated schedule for softball required some teams to play doubleheaders, sometimes late into the night, which affected the student-athletes' health, safety, and performance. As one participant who played in the 2019 Women's College World Series recalled, "Sunday, we played Alabama and our loss [required us to play two games in one day]. We were told we needed to change dugouts, change uniforms and be prepared to start in 30 minutes."

To address this scheduling concern, on September 8, 2021, the NCAA announced that the Competition Oversight Committee had approved expanding the schedule for the softball tournament from seven to nine days.<sup>147</sup> This format will eliminate the automatic double-headers for teams that lose on the first day of the championship, and will add a rest day for the two teams that advance to the finals, permitting greater rest and recovery for student-athletes, particularly if inclement weather disrupts the planned schedule.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Championship and Alliances Staffing Allocation (as of Apr. 15, 2021).

<sup>145</sup> The NCAA added a second championship manager prior to this year's championship after the retirement of the individual who had been managing Division I softball for many years.

<sup>146</sup> 2019 Division I Softball Championship, Pre-Championship Manual at 14; 2019 Division I Baseball Championship, Pre-Championship Manual at 26; 2021 Division I Softball Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 14; 2021 Men's College World Series Omaha Participant 2020-21 Manual, Appendix A.

<sup>147</sup> *Women's College World Series Adds Two Days*, NCAA (Sept. 8, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/general-womens-college-world-series-adds-two-days>.

<sup>148</sup> NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee, Report from the NCAA Division I Softball Committee at 2 (July 19, 2021).



Further exacerbating challenges with the softball championship schedule were autograph sessions held at inopportune times. At the softball tournament, student-athletes were obligated to sign autographs for 30 minutes after their first game of the championship. In 2019, for example, the first game for two of the competing teams began at 9:00 pm and finished at 11:30 pm; by the time the teams finished signing autographs and made it back to their hotel, it was nearly 12:45 am. At the baseball championship, student-athletes spent 45 minutes signing autographs on the opening celebration day of the tournament. NCAA staff reported that they have discontinued the autograph sessions at both championships going forward.

Travel party and squad size. Stakeholders have highlighted disparities between baseball and softball with respect to travel party and squad size. Both championships have a 64-team bracket, and the sponsorship on campuses is nearly identical (299 teams for Division I baseball, and 296 teams for Division I softball). But softball teams are only permitted a squad size of 20 student-athletes, while baseball gets 27.<sup>149</sup> Softball is permitted an additional 15 people (student-athletes and coaches) who may attend the championship and sit in the dugout, but the additional student-athletes may not wear their uniform or play in the game, for a total bench size of 35.<sup>150</sup> Baseball is permitted a bench size of 40.<sup>151</sup> Coaches recalled that “[i]t was so disappointing to tell three of our student-athletes who are on the official [squad], dressed out every game during the regular season and have worked hard alongside their teammates all year that they cannot put on their uniform for the most important experience earned by the TEAM, which includes each of them!”

The historical justification for the difference in squad size is that baseball used more pitchers than softball. But according to stakeholders, the number of pitchers used in a softball game has “changed immensely” because the softball “[h]itters got better,” so it is “basically impossible to have one pitcher per game.” Indeed, one coach reported that while she had only two pitchers on the team in 2006, she now has six. And, according to these stakeholders, an average of 13.6 student-athletes play in each softball game, whereas an average of 15 student-athletes play in each baseball game.

Accordingly, after this year’s championship, the Division I Softball Committee requested that the softball squad size be increased from 20 to 22 student-athletes and that the travel party size increase from 28 to 30, which the NCAA anticipates will cost approximately \$246,000 per year.<sup>152</sup> Both of these proposals have been forwarded to the Competition Oversight Committee as part of their plan “to engage in a more holistic review of all team-sport squad and bench sizes.”<sup>153</sup> The

<sup>149</sup> *Id.*; 2021 Men’s College World Series Omaha Participant Manual at 72.

<sup>150</sup> 2021 Division I Softball Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 14.

<sup>151</sup> In the regional and super-regional rounds, baseball may only have 35 people on the bench. 2021 Men’s College World Series Omaha Participant Manual at 72; 2021 Division I Baseball Championship, Participant Manual, Preliminary Rounds at 16.

<sup>152</sup> NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee, Report from the NCAA Division I Softball Committee at 1, 3 (July 19, 2021).

<sup>153</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee at 7 (Sept. 8, 2021).

Division I Softball Committee also recommended that the bench size be expanded such that an additional three student-athletes be permitted to be in uniform in the dugout, but not play.<sup>154</sup> The Competition Oversight Committee has yet to consider that recommendation.

Equipment, awards, and gifts. The equipment, awards, and gifts that are provided to the Division I baseball student-athletes are different in some respects than those provided to the Division I softball student-athletes. With respect to equipment, both baseball and softball have contracts with Rawlings, but stakeholders reported that softball has historically received significantly fewer practice balls than baseball, with softball receiving seven dozen for the regional rounds and five dozen for the super-regional rounds, and baseball receiving more than 40 dozen for the regionals and 22 dozen for the super-regionals. The baseball teams have also received canvas bags for ball storage, which the softball teams have not.

In a glaring example of the difference in awards, since 1999, Omaha, with the NCAA's knowledge and agreement, has provided extravagant trophies to the most outstanding player in the baseball tournament, known as the John D. Diesing, Sr. Award.<sup>155</sup> The trophies for that award have been purchased through 2036 at approximately \$4,000 per trophy.<sup>156</sup> The existence of this trophy, and the host's ability to provide mementos to the teams, are built into the host agreement between Omaha and the NCAA<sup>157</sup> and are paid for pursuant to the waterfall financial structure. This year, the NCAA began distributing trophies for the most valuable player at the softball championship as well, at a cost of approximately \$300 per trophy.<sup>158</sup>

As for student-athlete gifts, they were either already similar, or are being made more similar going forward:

<sup>154</sup> Report from the NCAA Division I Softball Committee July 19, 2021 Videoconference, NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee, NCAA (July 19, 2021).

<sup>155</sup> John D. Diesing, Sr., College World Series of Omaha, Inc. (last visited Oct. 22, 2021), <https://cwsomaha.com/history/john-d-diesing-sr/>.

<sup>156</sup> The City of Omaha purchased these trophies in bulk at the commencement of the last host agreement in 2008. Each year, the NCAA pays its portion for the trophy as part of the waterfall agreement.

<sup>157</sup> MCWS Host Agreement §§ 5.6, 10.9.

<sup>158</sup> NCAA staff reported that they are currently pursuing the creation of a more developed most outstanding player trophy in conjunction with the Oklahoma City community and the USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium.



## NCAA External Gender Equity Review

## Phase II

BASEBALL	SOFTBALL
Rawlings provides 280 student-athlete gifts, approximately 35 per team at the Men's College World Series, most commonly a Rawlings wallet.	Historically, Rawlings has provided approximately 168 student-athlete gifts, enough to give to each team's squad size plus one additional student-athlete at the Women's College World Series, most commonly a handbag or clutch. Going forward, Rawlings will provide 200 gifts, or approximately 25 per team.
The travel parties have the option to select from the gift and memento suite to purchase apparel.	The travel parties have the option to select from the gift and memento suite to purchase apparel.
Commemorative coin (discontinued going forward).	No commemorative coin.
In 2021, gift bags for the travel party, including an NCAA branded Yeti rambler, provided by Corporate Champion Coca-Cola.	In 2021, gift bags for the travel party, including an NCAA branded Yeti rambler, provided by Corporate Champion Coca Cola.

However, softball players have historically had fewer opportunities to purchase commemorative gifts as compared to baseball players. For example, baseball student-athletes and fans have had the ability to purchase commemorative chairs called Spec Seats for \$75, and each member of the travel party for the teams that advance to the Men's College World Series received a photo plaque of the team, taken in front of the statue outside of the stadium. Prior to this year, softball student-athletes and fans could only purchase photos. In 2019, the NCAA discontinued providing photo plaques to the baseball teams, and this year, the NCAA staff changed the policy for the Women's College World Series to mirror that of the Men's College World Series with respect to the commemorative chairs. Softball student-athletes still must purchase their own photos.

Hotels and transportation. The hotels and transportation provided to baseball and softball student-athletes have also differed. As has been the practice for many years, 50 rooms are held per team at the baseball championship, compared to only 16 rooms per team at the softball championship. The NCAA reported that they did not receive any feedback that teams were unable to book rooms at their assigned hotels, but they are revisiting the policy. Making transportation to and from the hotels more difficult, the softball teams are only permitted one rental car per team and police escorts are not used for all teams at all times, whereas baseball teams are allotted two rental cars per team and have police escorts for all practice and competition days. This year, the lack of police escorts and transportation options led to softball teams getting stuck in traffic on their way to and from the stadium.

Branding. The NCAA previously branded the Division I baseball finals as the “College World Series,” and the Division I softball finals as the “Women’s College World Series.” More than a decade ago, however, the NCAA added the “Men’s” modifier to the branding for the baseball final games. And the host agreement signed in 2008 between the NCAA and Omaha provides that “[t]he official name of the [championship] shall be the ‘NCAA Men’s College World Series.’”<sup>159</sup> But the College World Series logo still appears on the NCAA’s official bracket for Division I baseball without “Men’s” in front of it,<sup>160</sup> as does the image on the front page of the NCAA’s webpage for the Men’s College World Series. *See* pp. 31-34.



*Images of the Men's and Women's College World Series Logo<sup>161</sup>*

Fan festivals and other events. At the baseball tournament in years past, the NCAA and its local organizing committee, with the help of the Champions and Partners, have created many student-athlete and fan-centered events that are absent or smaller at the softball tournament. According to NCAA staff, these typically include:

- An opening banquet, which at the baseball tournament permits 55 attendees per team, but permits only 35 attendees per team at the softball tournament free of charge, with each softball team given the opportunity to purchase additional tickets.
- An opening ceremony, at times with a parachute team, a concert, and fireworks at the Men’s College World Series, but no such opening ceremony at the Women’s College World Series. In 2021, however, an all-female parachute team landed on the outfield before the final game of the Women’s College World Series.

<sup>159</sup> *Id.* § 5.1.

<sup>160</sup> Bracket, Division I Baseball, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/brackets/baseball/d1/2021>.

<sup>161</sup> Images from the NCAA.



- A free massage clinic at the baseball tournament provided to anyone participating in or working at the tournament, available on practice days (discontinued after this year).<sup>162</sup>

The Women's College World Series hosts other fan-facing events, including opening the stadium for fan activities such as photo opportunities, lawn games, open practices and, beginning in 2021, a Military and Public Service Appreciation Night, in which the NCAA honors military personnel on the field with a large American flag and a special military themed event for fans.

While both championships have a fan festival, stakeholders have commented that the fan festival at the Men's College World Series is more developed than the festival at the Women's College World Series. In Omaha, the fan festival is accompanied by a trolley, which makes more than a dozen stops throughout the city and ends at the contractually designated "Fan Fest Area" at the stadium. The fan festival at the Men's College World Series has attracted several Champions and Partners, including AT&T, Buffalo Wild Wings, Buick, Capital One, Coca-Cola, Marriott, Pizza Hut, and Unilever.<sup>163</sup>

In Oklahoma City, the fan festival, which is held in the stadium parking lot, reportedly has less "pomp and circumstance." Nevertheless, the Women's College World Series attracts similar Champion and Partner activations as the Men's College World Series, including AT&T, Buffalo Wild Wings, Buick, Capital One, Coca-Cola, Pizza Hut, Reese's, and Unilever.<sup>164</sup>

**Other considerations.** Although Division I softball does not have the benefit of the substantial history and support that Division I baseball has enjoyed, the growth and popularity of the softball championship is undeniable and bodes well for further expansion of the sport. More fans have been tuning in to watch the softball championship than ever before. This year, ESPN and ESPN2 aired all of the games at the Women's College World Series, as well as many of the super-regional games.<sup>165</sup> Viewership for the Women's College World Series games ranged from around 500,000 to 2.08 million—more than the final game of the Men's College World Series, which drew at most 1.67 million viewers. In fact, the Women's College World Series has one of the highest viewerships of all of the championships that fall within the ESPN agreement.

Similarly, in-person attendance at the Women's College World Series has grown significantly since 2018, with the final rounds bringing in more than \$1.4 million in ticket sales in 2018, \$1.6 million in 2019, and more than \$2.6 million in 2021.<sup>166</sup> While some of the increase in

<sup>162</sup> This massage clinic was the topic of media reporting during this year's championship. See David Leonhardt, *Massages for Men, Doubleheaders for Women*, N.Y. Times (June 4, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/04/briefing/college-sports-gender-inequality.html>. The massages were offered at the baseball tournament because the host institution, Creighton University, has students who study massage as part of their major and need a certain number of clinic hours to graduate. The University permitted students to obtain those clinic hours by providing free massages to the student-athletes, coaches, and officials at the baseball tournament. The staff planning the baseball tournament did not communicate with the staff planning the softball tournament that they would have access to these free massages. According to NCAA staff, that free program has been discontinued.

<sup>163</sup> Spreadsheet from Corporate Relations Staff Member of Champions and Partners Activations from 2018-19.

<sup>164</sup> *Id.*

<sup>165</sup> NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>166</sup> Championship Attendance Summary (2015 to Present).

ticket sales was due to Oklahoma City’s seating expansion in 2020, during its first year in use, the expanded stadium sold out for the final round between the University of Oklahoma and Florida State University,<sup>167</sup> despite the ongoing pandemic.

## 2. Ice Hockey

The Division I Men’s Ice Hockey Championship provides a markedly different experience for its student-athletes than its counterpart, the NC Women’s Ice Hockey Championship. The men’s championship, which is a much larger event involving twice as many teams and four-to-five times as many fans,<sup>168</sup> benefits from greater promotion, more extensive television coverage, and a more professional “look and feel.” One stakeholder with experience at both the men’s and women’s tournaments observed, “It’s really like they’re different sports.”

In this way, the ice hockey championships are a stark example of how the NCAA’s broader decision to provide greater support to more revenue-producing championships has a gender equity impact on the student-athlete experience. As one stakeholder put it, “[The NCAA] uses its decision-making and negotiating power to bolster men’s hockey events, while squandering opportunities to support women’s hockey in ways that would both help the sport and itself.”

**Championship experience.** A key difference between the men’s and women’s ice hockey championships is the size of the events and their overall “look and feel.” One stakeholder suggested, “There’s very little comparison [between the two].”

While the women’s Frozen Four—the moniker used for the championship semifinals and finals—is often held on campus, the men’s Frozen Four is held at National Hockey League facilities in major cities in order to accommodate the large crowds that attend the men’s games. The disparity in crowd size is significant: the men’s championship sold approximately 40,700 tickets in 2019, compared to approximately 10,300 sold for the women’s championship.<sup>169</sup> And the large crowds help to bring in substantial revenue for the men’s championship—approximately \$5.84 million in 2019, compared to the \$154,189 generated by the women’s championship in that same year.<sup>170</sup>

The use of professional facilities gives men’s ice hockey access to state-of-the-art technology that is not available at the women’s Frozen Four. And the NCAA spends almost four times more on signage at the men’s tournament than it does at the women’s tournament, in part because it has to cover a significantly larger venue.<sup>171</sup> While one women’s ice hockey stakeholder noted that she is “not necessarily a proponent [of having] a game in a 15,000 person arena,” she

<sup>167</sup> Championship History, Division I Softball, NCAA (last visited Oct. 23, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/softball/d1>.

<sup>168</sup> Championship Attendance Summary (2015 to Present).

<sup>169</sup> *Id.*

<sup>170</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>171</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.



stated that the experience for women student-athletes in a smaller, campus venue is “starkly different.”



*Image of the 2019 Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship Venue<sup>172</sup>*



*Image of the 2019 Division I Women's Ice Hockey Championship Venue<sup>173</sup>*

Adding to the grander scale of the men's championship is the men's Frozen Four fan festival, known as the Frozen Fest. In a typical, non-COVID year, this event generally attracts corporate sponsors and is managed as part of the CBS/Turner relationship.<sup>174</sup> The women's championship has no equivalent event for its fans.

**Broadcasting, marketing, and promotion.** The Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship also gets significantly more broadcast attention than the women's championship. In recent years, ESPN has broadcast all rounds of the men's tournament on one of its stations or

<sup>172</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>173</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>174</sup> Fan Fest Agreement at 4.

its streaming platform, ESPN3; this year, the men's final was televised on ESPN.<sup>175</sup> In 2019, the Big Ten Network broadcast the women's semifinals and final only. In 2021, ESPN streamed one women's semifinal game on ESPN3, and televised the other semifinal and final games on ESPNU; the women's first-round games were streamed on NCAA.com.<sup>176</sup>

ESPN also broadcasts a one-hour selection show for the men's tournament, but the selection show for the women's tournament lasts only a few minutes on the NCAA website.<sup>177</sup> One women's ice hockey coach mused, "For our selection show, if you were cheering, you didn't know who you were playing, it was over that quickly."

Some decisions make it more difficult for the women's tournament to attract greater attention. First, the entire women's tournament is played in the second half of March, which means that it coincides with the extremely popular March Madness.<sup>178</sup> While the men's championship starts in late March (and initially overlaps with March Madness), a break in the schedule between the men's regionals and the men's Frozen Four means that the men's Frozen Four games do not compete with March Madness.<sup>179</sup>

Second, because it is revenue-producing, the NCAA disproportionately markets the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship relative to the women's.<sup>180</sup> Overall, the NCAA spends about \$193,000 each year on promotional expenses related to the men's tournament, compared to only \$11,000 a year for the women's.<sup>181</sup> The men's tournament also benefits from NCAA ticketing and marketing staff that help drive ticket sales and publicize the championship event. The NCAA maintains a webpage on NCAATickets.com that includes details on ticket packages for the men's tournament and allows fans to sign up to be notified about future ticket opportunities and event information.<sup>182</sup> In contrast, the women's tournament has access only to a marketing extern whose responsibilities include other winter championships.<sup>183</sup>

**Spending.** The disparity in investment in ice hockey is clearly demonstrated by the NCAA's overall spending for the two championships. For example, in 2019, the NCAA spent approximately \$4.2 million on the men's tournament and \$656,827 on the women's tournament.<sup>184</sup> That difference reflects, in part, the different size of the two championships, including travel

<sup>175</sup> NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 13, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>176</sup> *Id.*

<sup>177</sup> *Id.*

<sup>178</sup> 2021 Women's National Collegiate Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 11-12.

<sup>179</sup> 2021 Men's Division I Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 9.

<sup>180</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>181</sup> *Id.*; NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

<sup>182</sup> 2021-22 Championships Marketing Groupings; Men's Frozen Four, NCAA Ticketing (last visited Oct. 13, 2021), [https://www.ncaatickets.com/championship/mens-frozen-four?utm\\_campaign=inline-article](https://www.ncaatickets.com/championship/mens-frozen-four?utm_campaign=inline-article).

<sup>183</sup> 2021-22 NCAA Championship Marketing and Ticketing Who to Contact.

<sup>184</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.



expenses for twice as many men's teams participating in the championship. But even at the per student-athlete level, the amount is starkly disparate. In 2019, the NCAA spent \$9,805 per student-athlete at the men's championship and \$3,421 per student-athlete at the women's, a difference of more than \$6,000, or close to three times more.

This increased investment in men's ice hockey because it is revenue-producing contributes to a cycle similar to that experienced in Division I basketball. As one stakeholder put it: "The NCAA has committed to spending money in order to make money over time in men's hockey. This is a generosity it has never afforded women's hockey."

**Staffing and committee structure.** The Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship also benefits from substantially more staff assistance than the women's championship. There are 11 NCAA staff members who contribute to the planning of the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship: three Championships staff members, a media coordinator, and seven External Operations staff members who are dedicated to specific functions, including ticketing, marketing, broadcast, social media, corporate relations, and branding and fan experience.<sup>185</sup> Only two Championships staff generally contribute to the planning of the NC Women's Ice Hockey Championship.<sup>186</sup> Each championship also has a dedicated committee: the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee has six members, and the NC Women's Ice Hockey Committee has five.<sup>187</sup>

The larger men's event certainly requires some degree of greater staff assistance and committee size. That said, the disparity is significant, with more than five times as many staff members working on planning the men's tournament. In addition, men's hockey has staff who are wholly focused on and provide specialized expertise in social media and marketing, and the women do not. As one stakeholder observed, "Because there is a point person for each aspect of the men's tournament, there is more attention to detail in a wider range of areas. On the contrary, those serving on the women's championship staff need to multi-task."

The men's and women's ice hockey staff and committees do not appear to have any formal mechanisms for collaborating and communicating. Although the men's and women's ice hockey staff make an informal attempt to collaborate to ensure that aspects of the championships are equitable, the committees rarely communicate with one another. Where inter-committee communication does occur, it is informal in nature and often takes place between individual committee members with preexisting relationships. One committee member noted that more communication "might create some synergies" between the tournaments, which so far have never "been brought up."

<sup>185</sup> NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Staff List.

<sup>186</sup> 2021-22 Tournament Operations Assignments. Both the men's and women's ice hockey championships also have a national officiating coordinator, a NCAA secretary-rules editor, and a staff liaison for playing rules. See 2021 Women's National Collegiate Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 8; 2021 Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 8.

<sup>187</sup> Women's Ice Hockey Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=WIH](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=WIH); Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=IMIH](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=IMIH).



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

**Manual differences.** This failure in coordination between the men's and women's ice hockey staff and committees is demonstrated by a clear difference in their manuals. According to the 2021 NC Women's Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual, the women's teams are seeded and paired to reduce travel costs. While the top four women's teams are seeded "1-4 at the time of the selection call," the remaining four teams will be paired with teams 1-4 according to their relative strength only if "such pairings do not result in air travel that otherwise could be avoided."<sup>188</sup>

**SEEDINGS AND PAIRINGS**

The Women's Ice Hockey Committee will seed the selected participants as follows:

1. The top four teams according to the selection criteria will be seeded 1-4 at the time of the selection call. The remaining four teams will be placed in the bracket based on relative strength as long as these pairings do not result in additional flights. These teams will not be reseeded and the committee will not change the bracket once the tournament has begun.

Teams' relative strength, according to the committee's selection criteria, shall be considered when establishing pairings if such pairings do not result in air travel that otherwise could be avoided. The NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee shall have the authority to modify its working principles related to the championship site assignment on a case-by-case basis.

*Excerpt of the 2021 NC Women's Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual*

The men's tournament, by contrast, seeds and pairs teams to maximize "competitive equity, financial success and the likelihood of a playoff-type atmosphere at each regional site."<sup>189</sup> The 2021 Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual includes no discussion of reducing travel costs. Rather, to the contrary, it emphasizes that "the integrity of the bracket will be protected."<sup>190</sup> As one person noted, "Our body of coaches has been more interested in competitive equity – getting the best four teams to the Frozen Four. They are very interested in making sure that we have the right match-ups more so than [reducing] travel."

**SEEDING AND PAIRINGS**

The following steps are taken during the selection meeting:

In setting up the tournament, the committee begins with a list of priorities to ensure a successful tournament on all fronts, including competitive equity, financial success and the likelihood of a playoff-type atmosphere at each regional site. For this model, the following is a basic set of priorities:

1. Once the six automatic qualifiers and 10 at-large teams are selected, the next step is to develop four groups from the committee's rankings of 1-16. The top four teams are No. 1 seeds and will be placed in the bracket so that if all four teams advance to the Men's Frozen Four, the No. 1 seed will play the No. 4 seed and the No. 2 seed will play the No. 3 seed in the semifinals. The next four are targeted as No. 2 seeds. The next four are No. 3 seeds and the last four are No. 4 seeds.
2. Step two is to place the home teams. Host institutions that qualify will be placed at home.
3. Step three is to fill in the bracket so that first-round conference matchups are avoided, unless it corrupts the integrity of the bracket. If five or more teams from one conference are selected to the championship, then the integrity of the bracket will be protected (i.e., maintaining the pairing process according to seed will take priority over avoidance of first-round conference matchups). To complete each regional, the committee assigns one team from each of the remaining seeded groups so there is a No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 seed at each regional site.

*Excerpt of the 2021 Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual*

<sup>188</sup> 2021 Women's National Collegiate Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 14.

<sup>189</sup> 2021 Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 16.

<sup>190</sup> *Id.*



As one coach observed, “On the men’s side it’s about putting together the best field. On the women’s it’s about saving money and avoiding flights.” Stakeholders raised the concern that this difference in seeding impacts the competitiveness of the women’s tournament, making it less exciting, and potentially stunting the growth of the sport.

**Participation opportunities.** There are also fewer opportunities for women’s ice hockey student-athletes to participate in the championships than there are for men’s ice hockey student-athletes. As discussed above, there are twice as many men’s teams (16) than women’s teams (8) in the championships, which is primarily attributable to the fact that 60 Division I institutions sponsor men’s ice hockey, whereas only 41 Division I and II institutions sponsor women’s ice hockey.<sup>191</sup> Even accounting for that difference in sponsorship, however, the percentage of teams that are able to compete in the championship is higher for men (26.7%) than it is for women (19.5%).

This year, the NC Women’s Ice Hockey Committee requested that the women’s championship bracket size increase from eight to 10 teams to provide more participation opportunities for women student-athletes.<sup>192</sup> That change would have brought the women’s team participation ratio from 19.5% to 24.4%, still lower than the men’s. The Competition Oversight Committee notes from a September 8, 2021, meeting state that “[w]hile the committee supports the merits of the proposal to expand to 10 teams, it agreed to table the matter until the next opportunity to fund it.”<sup>193</sup> Despite their request being denied, women’s ice hockey stakeholders plan to continue to push to expand their championship to as many as 12 teams.

In addition to allowing proportionally more men’s teams to participate in the championship, the NCAA also allows more men’s ice hockey student-athletes to dress in uniform and participate on the teams that qualify. Whereas the squad size for women’s ice hockey is limited to 24 student-athletes, the squad size for men’s ice hockey is 27.<sup>194</sup> One women’s ice hockey coach told us about a student-athlete who was not allowed to play due to championship squad-size constraints: “[S]he was heartbroken and in tears that she had worked so hard and none of it would be recognized.”

### 3. Lacrosse

Stakeholders described how the NCAA Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Championships provide disparate student-athlete experiences in all three divisions, stemming from the differences in the structure of the championships, venues, budget, staffing, and a lack of communication and coordination between staff and committees. Following the events of this year’s Division I

<sup>191</sup> 2021 Women’s National Collegiate Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 11; 2021 Division I Men’s Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 14.

<sup>192</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee at 6 (Sept. 8, 2021).

<sup>193</sup> *Id.*

<sup>194</sup> 2020-21 Division I Championships Transportation and Per Diem Policies at 9.

basketball tournaments, the NCAA staff and lacrosse committees addressed some of lacrosse's most glaring differences. Numerous issues remain, however.

***Championship structure and venue.*** Perhaps the most consequential differences between the men's and women's championships are the championship structure and venue. Men's lacrosse holds a joint championship for all three divisions, which generally takes place in a professional (*i.e.*, National Football League) football stadium. Women's lacrosse hosts a separate championship for each division, and the women's championships generally occur in college stadiums or similar venues. As one stakeholder noted, "The men's championship final site is usually a major city and a football stadium, while the women's final is often a small town."

The fact that the men's championships are played in larger, professional stadiums impacts the "look and feel" of the championship and gives the Division I, II, and III men student-athletes the benefits of better audio and visual setups, more fan suites and luxury boxes, better locker rooms and facilities, and more support staff. An NCAA staffer observed that the women's championship stadiums generally do not have "as many of [the] bells and whistles (video boards, etc.) that the NFL stadiums have."

Beyond the additional "bells and whistles," professional NFL stadiums have a much larger capacity compared to the stadiums used for the women's championship games. The Division I women's championship generally sells out its capacity, whereas the men's joint championship, though too large for most non-NFL venues, does not come close to making NFL stadiums feel full. In 2019, for example, men's lacrosse sold 28,160 tickets to the Division I men's final in a stadium with a capacity for 67,594, while women's lacrosse sold 9,017 tickets to the Division I women's final in a stadium with a capacity for 8,500.<sup>195</sup> Total attendance at the Division I women's championship for all rounds has increased year after year: in 2017, there were 18,241 total tickets sold; in 2018 there were 19,869; and in 2019 there were 22,527.<sup>196</sup> That has not been the same for the Division I men's championship, where attendance for all rounds has decreased in recent years: in 2017 there were 69,531 total tickets sold; in 2018 there were 60,113; and in 2019 there were 52,746.<sup>197</sup>

That women's lacrosse is played in smaller capacity stadiums may inhibit its ability to grow its fan base and increase championship attendance. At the same time, some stakeholders observed that filling the smaller venues for the women's championships improves the event's feel, while the men's championships are held in football stadiums that are "this cavernous place so even if you get 45,000 people it still looks empty."

<sup>195</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>196</sup> *Id.*

<sup>197</sup> *Id.*



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



*Division I Men's Championship, Gillette Stadium (Left) and Division I Women's Championship, LaValle Stadium (Right)*<sup>198</sup>

In 2025 and 2026, the Division I women's championship will join the Divisions I, II, and III joint men's championship at a single venue, Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts.<sup>199</sup> According to multiple sources, while Gillette was willing to host all six championships (*i.e.*, all three divisions for both men's and women's lacrosse), the Division I Men's Lacrosse Committee was concerned with the logistics of hosting too many championships and teams at one venue. An NCAA staff member familiar with the process shared, "The DI men's committee expressed concern about the significant scale of hosting six championships with at least 16 teams over one weekend for an outdoor sport." There were also concerns with, among other things, the scheduling of the championships (including because the Division II and III women end their season a week before the men) and the ability to provide sufficient practice times for the teams competing in all six championships. Thus, only the Division I women's championship was added to the 2025 and 2026 men's joint championships. This raised significant concerns with some stakeholders, who felt that the "DII and DIII women are excluded" and described the choice as a "disappointing decision."

**Branding, marketing, and promotion.** The NCAA spends significantly more money on, and invests more staff and resources in, branding, marketing, and promotion for the revenue-producing Division I men's championship than for the Division I women's championship: approximately \$53,211 on general promotion for the men compared to \$17,396 for the women.<sup>200</sup> This, of course, has an impact on the level and quality of marketing for the two championships. For example, stakeholders noticed and complained that "[b]illboards were put up on Interstate 95 when Philadelphia hosted the men's tournament, the NCAA Trophy was brought out to the US Lacrosse Convention in Baltimore, and advertisements flooded TV and print in New England

<sup>198</sup> Images from the NCAA.

<sup>199</sup> DI Women's Lacrosse Champ Info Future Dates & Sites, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/lacrosse-women/di/future-info>; DI Men's Lacrosse Champ Info Future Dates & Sites, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/lacrosse-men/di/future-info>.

<sup>200</sup> See NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021; NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

when Boston held the Championships. None of these have happened in promoting the women's lacrosse championships at any level." Indeed, as one coach noted, "when it comes to marketing, at the NFL stadium, there were signs in town on the highway. They have a huge budget. But we're relying on the host school, and they don't have the budget. We don't have the opportunity to grow our sport."

Moreover, until recently, social media accounts—including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook—for NCAA lacrosse were branded only for the men's championship. This changed in 2021, and now these are joint men's and women's social media pages.<sup>201</sup> Similarly, until this year, the Division I women's championship did not use the same lacrosse championships logo as the men. Although the women adopted a similar logo this year, the newer logo still has not appeared on student awards and trophies because it was adopted too close to the start of the championship. This distinction is meaningful to stakeholders, who noted, "Men's lacrosse has the logo with the lacrosse sticks, and it took us five years to get that. But it's still not on the trophy or the students' awards."



*2019 Logos for Men's (Left) and Women's (Right) Lacrosse Championships*

<sup>201</sup> See NCAA Lacrosse (@NCAALAX), Twitter (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://twitter.com/ncaalax>; NCAA Lacrosse (@ncaalax), Facebook (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://www.facebook.com/ncaalax>; NCAA Lacrosse (@ncaalax), Instagram (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://www.instagram.com/ncaalax>.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



2021 Logos for Men's (Left) and Women's (Right) Lacrosse Championships

**Fan festival and other events.** The revenue-producing Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship has a fan festival every year with prizes, trophies, sponsor activation, music, and other experiences for fans and student-athletes. The Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship traditionally had no equivalent event, but in 2017, started hosting its own similar, but smaller-scale, fan festival. The men's fan festival, which costs over \$200,000 to put on, is planned, organized, and subsidized by CBS/Turner, while the Division I women's fan festival is run by the NCAA at what the NCAA reported was essentially no cost, with corporate partners that activate at their own expense.<sup>202</sup> In previous years, the men's fan festival has featured appearances by Major League Lacrosse players, a Capital One Cup Fan Zone where fans can play games and participate in interactive experiences, and youth clinics.<sup>203</sup> The women's more recent, smaller-scale fan festival, on the other hand, was described as "extremely limited."<sup>204</sup> As one administrator of the lacrosse championship noted, the disparity in fan festivals "is something noticed by fans and participants."

<sup>202</sup> See 2019 Men's Lacrosse Fan Festival Settlement Statement; NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>203</sup> See, e.g., *Hang with Mike Powell at Capital One Cup Fan Zone at the Laxperience this Weekend*, Lacrosse Playground (May 22, 2012), <https://www.lacrosseplayground.com/hang-with-mike-powell-at-capital-one-cup-fan-zone-at-the-laxperience-this-weekend/>; *STX Sponsors 2014 NCAA Lacrosse Championship*, SGB Media (May 23, 2014), <https://sgbonline.com/stx-sponsors-2014-ncaa-lacrosse-championship/>; *MLL players Will Be at the Line Today Through Monday for LaXperience Fan Fest*, PhillyLacrosse.com (May 25, 2013), <https://phillylacrosse.com/2013/ml-l-players-will-be-at-the-line-today-through-monday-for-laxperience-fan-fest/>.

<sup>204</sup> Because the NCAA does not comprehensively track or audit which corporate sponsors activate at specific championships or how much they spend on those activations, it is unclear exactly how much the activations at the women's fan festival cost.



*Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship Fan Fest in Philadelphia, PA<sup>205</sup>*

The Division I men's championship also has a host of other amenities and experiences that the Division I women's championship does not. For example, the men's championship uses video footage from previous rounds of the same championship for display at the championship, whereas the Division I women's championship uses footage from the prior year's championship. The men's championship has fireworks when the national anthem is sung before games and postgame confetti, whereas the Division I women's championship will only occasionally have confetti. The men's championship has an on-site emcee and a half-time presentation, whereas the women's championship generally does not.

**Spending.** The Division I men's championship spends more overall and more per student-athlete than the Division I women's championship.<sup>206</sup> This seems somewhat counterintuitive, since due to its larger bracket (29 teams, as compared to the men's 17 teams), the women's championship has to fund more travel costs for more student-athletes and additional costs for more preliminary sites. And, as several people familiar with the process noted, the joint championships on the men's side save money as compared to hosting separate championships for each of the divisions in three separate locations for the women.

Yet, for example, in 2019, the NCAA spent \$2,619,073 at the Division I men's championship and \$1,737,259 at the women's.<sup>207</sup> And the NCAA spent almost \$3,000 more per student-athlete on the men's championship (\$4,814 versus \$1,939).

<sup>205</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>206</sup> Even though men's lacrosse hosts a joint championship across all three divisions, the NCAA disaggregates its budget and spending numbers by division. The spending numbers in this section therefore directly compare spending on the Division I men's championship with spending on the Division I women's championship.

<sup>207</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.



These spending differences exist in categories that directly impact the student-athlete experience, including signage, awards, mementos, and gifts. In 2019, the NCAA spent \$109,660 on the men's signage, and only \$32,809 on the women's signage at the Division I championships.<sup>208</sup> And the NCAA spent \$42,714 on the men's awards and mementos, while spending \$43,399, or just \$685 more, for the women's, even though the women's championship had over 350 more student-athletes participating.<sup>209</sup> While some additional costs are associated with the use of a larger venue for the men's championship, and comparing the men's and women's budgets is complicated by the fact that the men's three divisions share some operational expenses, these spending numbers demonstrate how funding for the women's championship contributes to a lesser student-athlete experience.

***Committee and staff communication.*** Several stakeholders attributed inequities in the lacrosse championships, at least in part, to the fact that the Division I Men's and Women's Lacrosse Committees do not communicate or share ideas effectively. As one coach put it, some of the gender disparities between the men's and women's championships "raised questions like 'Do the committees talk?' and 'Do people look at differences in the manuals?' and we were told in no uncertain terms, 'no, they don't.'" This was confirmed by a member of the Division II Men's Lacrosse Committee, who explained, "To the best of my knowledge, the staff and committee structure is very similar for both sports, but as a men's lacrosse committee member, we don't have any professional interactions with our counterparts on the women's side." This has led some to observe that "[m]en's lacrosse and women's lacrosse seem to run as two completely different sports, as if they had no relation to each other."

Stakeholders also reported a need for increased communication and collaboration between staff members. For example, one person recalled that the NCAA staff did not initially coordinate on gifts provided by corporate sponsor STX. While ultimately the NCAA staff worked together with STX to ensure that the same gifts were being provided for both the men's and the women's championships, there was some delay in identifying the issue.

***Other considerations.*** Following public scrutiny of the NCAA during this year's March Madness, the NCAA implemented some meaningful gender equity improvements before this year's lacrosse championships in late May. As one staff member put it, "I honestly think a lot of inequities were rectified last year . . . and [the championships are] more on an equal level from our standpoint."

For example, prior to this year's championship, a significant disparity between the men's and women's championships was staff sizes, with the men's championship receiving almost double the amount of staff time than the women's championship (1.01 versus 1.99 FTEs).<sup>210</sup> The men's championship had support staff to help administer all aspects of the championship,

<sup>208</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

<sup>209</sup> *Id.* As discussed above, *see* pp. 44-46, the awards and mementos budget line items do not provide a complete picture of whether the NCAA's spending on awards, gifts, and mementos is equitable.

<sup>210</sup> *See* Championships and Alliances Staffing Allocation (as of Apr. 15, 2021).

including signage; in-venue staff to manage the video-boards, presentations, guests, and other aspects of the venue; a corporate relations staff member; and ticketing support. The women's championship did not.

For the 2021 championships, the NCAA increased the staffing for the women's championship to be in-line with the men's championship. One NCAA staff member reported, "From a staffing standpoint, the women's championship did not have a full internal team as the men did, but that was corrected in 2021 and there is now a full internal team in place for both championships." This shift has included adding staffing for the women's championship for in-venue presentation, signage, ticketing, and marketing. While pleased with this improvement, some stakeholders also mentioned that more work needs to be done in ensuring that the women's staff have a level of experience and expertise similar to the men's staff to "assist in the growth of the championship."

A correction was also made this year to the size of the travel party for the men's and women's championships. Until this year, the men had a travel party of 40 while the women's was only 38.<sup>211</sup> After identifying this difference during the NCAA's internal review, the NCAA staff posed the question: "why are they not the same?" The Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee requested an increase in the size of the women's travel party to match that of the men, which was approved for the 2021 championship.<sup>212</sup>

In addition, men's and women's lacrosse are currently coordinating on making their bench sizes more equitable. The women's bench size is generally 50—a number originally calculated by adding 12 individuals on the sideline to the old travel party of 38.<sup>213</sup> The men's bench size, on the other hand, is 52—a total of 12 individuals on the sideline beyond the travel party of 40.<sup>214</sup> This disparity is particularly notable because college women's lacrosse teams play with two more players on the field than the men—12 women student-athletes as compared to 10 men—and yet the women have a smaller bench size. This has a real impact on the student-athlete experience. As one coach noted, "I had 13 players who had to sit in the stands in 2019, not even on the sideline. And it's awkward not only for those students but also for their teammates on the field. And that's after all year building the team and doing everything together. And that's my worst part of the year."

On June 14, 2021, the Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee noted that it was planning to increase the bench size to match the men's lacrosse bench size. However, the committee has not made the change yet because the Division I Men's Lacrosse Committee is asking for a change to

<sup>211</sup> Compare 2020 Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 11, with 2020 Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 12.

<sup>212</sup> NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee Agenda (June 14, 2021) (noting that "the travel party size was increased to 40 for the 2021 championship").

<sup>213</sup> 2020 Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 12.

<sup>214</sup> 2020 Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship Participant Manual at 12.



the men's bench size,<sup>215</sup> and so the women's committee "discussed ideas for increasing the bench size to mirror that of the men and will finalize the approach after reviewing the recommendations coming from the men's lacrosse annual meeting."<sup>216</sup> Multiple staff members from the NCAA confirmed that the women are "going to put forward a proposal that mirror[s] that of the men" and are working to "make[] sure we're consistent."

#### 4. Volleyball

The Division I Women's and the NC Men's Volleyball Championships provide an example of vastly different championships where the women's championship is the larger event with more than nine times as many teams participating, more fan attendance, more financial and staff support, greater promotion, and more broadcasting coverage.<sup>217</sup>

These differences in the championships stem in large part from the fact that women's volleyball is significantly more popular than men's volleyball and generates substantially more revenue. In particular, while about 96% of the NCAA membership has a women's volleyball team, only about 14% of the membership has a men's volleyball team,<sup>218</sup> and more than double the number of fans generally attend the women's final championship games as compared to the men's.<sup>219</sup>

Volleyball is one of the most popular sports for women student-athletes, and its stakeholders have raised concerns that—perhaps because it does not have an equally popular men's counterpart—it receives less resources than other popular NCAA sports.

***Championship experience.*** The Division I Women's Volleyball Championship and the NC Men's Volleyball Championship are in many ways entirely different events. While 64 teams participate in the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship, only seven teams participate in the NC Men's Volleyball Championship.<sup>220</sup> The championships also take place in different

<sup>215</sup> See Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee (Oct. 4, 2021) ("The committee discussed but did not take action on a recommendation from the Men's Lacrosse Committee to adjust the bench size to accommodate a team's entire roster (as determined by the team's website) plus 12 nonstudent-athletes and two medical personnel. (The current bench size is 50 plus two medical personnel.) The Competition Oversight Committee agreed to revisit this request once it completes its broader review of squad size/travel party/bench size as noted in Informational Item 2 above.").

<sup>216</sup> See Report of the Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee (June 14, 2021).

<sup>217</sup> Even though there is a Division II Women's Volleyball Championship, this case study compares the NC Men's Volleyball Championship (which includes teams from Divisions I and II) to the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship. Like Division I women's volleyball, NC men's volleyball reports up through the Division I governance structure, including the Division I Competition Oversight Committee. NC men's volleyball is also governed by the same travel and per diem policies and procedures and is subject to the same budget process as Division I women's volleyball. The NCAA also hosts a national championship for beach volleyball; however, that sport and championship are separate from men's and women's indoor volleyball and, as a result, are not addressed as part of this case study.

<sup>218</sup> NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Database, NCAA (last visited Oct. 16, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-sports-sponsorship-and-participation-rates-database>.

<sup>219</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>220</sup> Road to the Championship, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/volleyball-women/d1/road-to-the-championship>; *NCAA Men's Volleyball Committee Announces Championship Selections*, NCAA (Apr. 25, 2021),

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

seasons, with the women's event occurring in the fall and the men's occurring in the spring.<sup>221</sup> In addition, all rounds of the men's championship take place on campus (a choice made by the NC Men's Volleyball Committee), whereas the final rounds of the women's championship take place off campus at large professional sports arenas, which, as one stakeholder noted, "elevates the feel of the event."

Far more fans attend the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship, which sells substantially more tickets and generates significantly more revenue than the men's championship. For example, in 2018-19, the final rounds of the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship sold 19,650 tickets, whereas the final rounds of the men's championship sold 4,379 tickets.<sup>222</sup> In that same year, women's volleyball generated about \$3 million in revenue, whereas men's volleyball generated about \$172,000.<sup>223</sup>

To support its larger fan base, women's volleyball sometimes has interactive fan events at the championship with corporate sponsor activations, while the men's volleyball championship has no ancillary events. The NCAA also provides significantly more signage for the larger venue at the women's championship. For example, in 2018-19, the NCAA spent \$45,347 on signage at the women's tournament, but only \$2,817 on signage at the men's tournament, or approximately half as much per student-athlete.<sup>224</sup>

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<https://www.ncaa.com/news/volleyball-men/article/2021-04-25/ncaa-mens-volleyball-committee-announces-championship-selections>.

<sup>221</sup> NCAA Sports & Playing Rules Committee Rosters, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/ncaa-sports-playing-rules-committee-rosters>.

<sup>222</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>223</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>224</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



*Photo of the 2019 NC Men's Volleyball Championship Game<sup>225</sup>*



*Photo of the 2019 Division I Women's Volleyball Championship Game<sup>226</sup>*

Not all items impacting the student-athlete experience at the volleyball championships are different, however. For example, the men's and women's volleyball student-athletes largely receive the same gifts and awards at the tournaments.

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<sup>225</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>226</sup> Image from the NCAA.

**Broadcasting and marketing.** As we have seen in other sports, the NCAA puts greater resources towards broadcasting and marketing women's volleyball because it generates more revenue than its men's counterpart. As one men's volleyball stakeholder stated, "I am unsure there is any effort from the national office to promote and market our championship. It is all left up to the host institution."

While the NCAA has a team of staff members who work on social media, marketing, and ticketing for the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship,<sup>227</sup> the Championships staff member for men's volleyball must handle these responsibilities largely on his own. In 2019, the NCAA spent more than \$24,000 on promotion for Division I women's volleyball, and only about \$15,000 on promotion for men's volleyball.<sup>228</sup> And the women's championship has its own custom championship logo, while the men's championship uses the stock logo depicted below.



*Custom Logo for the 2021 Division I Women's Volleyball Championship (Left) and Stock Logo for the NC Men's Volleyball Championship (Right)*<sup>229</sup>

The NCAA's greater focus on marketing women's volleyball was particularly noticeable this year, when the NCAA, due to limited staffing resources in its social media department, converted its Twitter handle for volleyball (@NCAAVolleyball) into an account for women's volleyball only. As a result, women's volleyball was able to keep all of the followers for the account built up over more than a decade, while men's volleyball (now @NCAAMVolleyball) was forced to start from scratch. Currently, the women's volleyball Twitter account, which is dedicated to both women's indoor and beach volleyball, has more than 195,000 followers, whereas the men's Twitter account has only about 270 followers.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>227</sup> 2021-22 NCAA Championships Marketing Groups.

<sup>228</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019; NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

<sup>229</sup> 2021 Division I Women's Volleyball Championship, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/volleyball-women/d1/future-info>; NC Men's Volleyball, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/sports/volleyball-men/nc>.

<sup>230</sup> NCAA Volleyball (@NCAAVolleyball), Twitter (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://twitter.com/NCAAVolleyball>; NCAA Men's Volleyball (@NCAAMVolleyball), Twitter (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://twitter.com/ncaamvolleyball>.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

In addition to receiving more marketing resources from the NCAA, women's volleyball has more extensive and prominent broadcast coverage compared to the men's volleyball championship. In 2021, for example, all rounds of the women's tournament were broadcast or streamed live on an ESPN channel, with the final game broadcast on ESPN2.<sup>231</sup> In that same year, only the final game of the men's championship was broadcast on ESPN2, with the semifinals available via livestream on NCAA.com.<sup>232</sup> In December 2018, more than 1.5 million viewers tuned into the women's final match on ESPN2, whereas in May 2019, only 390,150 viewers tuned into the men's final match on the same channel.<sup>233</sup>

**Spending.** While the NCAA spends significantly more on the Division I women's championship than it spends on the NC men's championship, the amount spent per student-athlete is roughly equal. For example, in 2018-19, the NCAA spent more than \$3.8 million on women's volleyball, but spent only \$376,942 on men's volleyball. That amounts, however, to a roughly similar spend per student-athlete: \$3,590 spent per male student-athlete and \$3,970 per female student-athlete.<sup>234</sup>

**Staffing and committees.** In part because of its larger size, the NCAA dedicates substantially more staffing resources to the Division I women's championship than the NC men's championship. Whereas the men's championship is usually staffed by only one championship manager, the women's volleyball championship is usually staffed by a championship manager, an additional coordinator, and NCAA staff from broadcasting, media relations, marketing, ticketing, and corporate relations. Both championships have their own committees, but the NC Men's Volleyball Committee has five members, whereas the Division I Women's Volleyball Committee has 10 members.<sup>235</sup>

At least in part because the two championships occur at different times of the year, the NCAA staff and committees for men's and women's volleyball rarely communicate or coordinate around issues of gender equity. As one NCAA staff member observed, "If you think about men's and women's basketball, they play in the same season, so there's opportunities for more synergy. So often, we're not on the same planning schedule."

**Participation opportunities.** The proportion of volleyball student-athletes who are able to compete in the championships is greater for women (19.2%) than for men (14.6%). The official travel party size for women's volleyball is also higher: 22 for the women, 21 for the men—even though both men's and women's volleyball teams are comprised of 15 student-athletes.

<sup>231</sup> NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>232</sup> *Id.*

<sup>233</sup> Division I Women's Volleyball Nielsen Ratings; NC Men's Volleyball Nielsen Ratings.

<sup>234</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>235</sup> Division I Women's Volleyball Committee Roster, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=IWVB](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=IWVB); Men's Volleyball Committee Roster, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=MVB](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=MVB).

**Other considerations.** Although women's volleyball receives far more NCAA support than its men's counterpart, women's volleyball stakeholders raised the concern that they receive less NCAA support and investment than other similarly popular sports. In particular, stakeholders point to the fact that while volleyball is the "top team sport in U.S. high schools" for girls, they receive a fraction of the resources from the NCAA that the Division I Women's Basketball Championship receives, in part because they do not have an extremely popular men's counterpart.<sup>236</sup>

In addition, women's volleyball raised several concerns about this year's Division I Volleyball Championship.<sup>237</sup> At this year's championship, the NCAA cut the total number of women's teams that could participate from 64 to 48 due to precautions related to COVID-19, even though many Division I championships held in the 2020-21 academic year did not see similar cuts.<sup>238</sup> And, until significant public outcry caused ESPN to reverse course on April 9, 2021,<sup>239</sup> ESPN had been planning to stream the first two rounds of the tournament without play-by-play announcers.<sup>240</sup>

Women's volleyball coaches also raised concerns about flooring provided at the NCAA championships. In particular, the Division I and NC Volleyball Championships are generally played on a surface called Sport Court instead of Taraflex, which volleyball stakeholders have described as the "standard in the sport" and which one stakeholder noted is "apparently better for the body on impact." This issue came to a head this year when, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship was played entirely at a single location, with the first three rounds held at a converted convention center.<sup>241</sup> After coaches expressed concern about the practice court flooring in the convention center (which was "sport court layered over cement flooring"),<sup>242</sup> the NCAA provided Taraflex flooring for the early rounds of the championship. The remaining matches, which were not held at the convention center, were played

<sup>236</sup> See *Affiliations*, AVCA (May 2021), <https://www.avca.org/newsletters/affiliations/may-2021.html>.

<sup>237</sup> Madeline Coleman, 'Bush League: Criticism of NCAA's Treatment of Women's Sports Continues Over Volleyball Tournament', *Sports Illustrated* (Apr. 8, 2021), <https://www.si.com/college/2021/04/09/ncaa-criticism-continues-over-womens-volleyball-tournament>.

<sup>238</sup> See *id.*; Brent Wagner, *Decision to Have 16 Fewer Teams for NCAA Volleyball Tournament Wasn't Revisited (And More Details About the Tournament)*, *Lincoln Journal Star* (Apr. 1, 2021), [https://journalstar.com/sports/huskers/volleyball/decision-to-have-16-fewer-teams-for-ncaa-volleyball-tournament-wasn-t-revisited-and-more/article\\_1c2efeea-37ad-53a5-892a-57285eec1e08.html](https://journalstar.com/sports/huskers/volleyball/decision-to-have-16-fewer-teams-for-ncaa-volleyball-tournament-wasn-t-revisited-and-more/article_1c2efeea-37ad-53a5-892a-57285eec1e08.html).

<sup>239</sup> *Clarifications on the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship*, NCAA (Apr. 9, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/clarifications-division-i-women-s-volleyball-championship>.

<sup>240</sup> Madeline Coleman, 'Bush League: Criticism of NCAA's Treatment of Women's Sports Continues Over Volleyball Tournament', *Sports Illustrated* (Apr. 8, 2021), <https://www.si.com/college/2021/04/09/ncaa-criticism-continues-over-womens-volleyball-tournament>.

<sup>241</sup> Glynn A. Hill, *NCAA Responds After Coaches Criticize Conditions at Women's Volleyball Tournament*, *Washington Post* (Apr. 9, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/04/09/ncaa-womens-volleyball-tournament-conditions/>.

<sup>242</sup> Madeline Coleman, 'Bush League: Criticism of NCAA's Treatment of Women's Sports Continues Over Volleyball Tournament', *Sports Illustrated* (Apr. 8, 2021), <https://www.si.com/college/2021/04/09/ncaa-criticism-continues-over-womens-volleyball-tournament>.



on Sport Court over a wood sport flooring system.<sup>243</sup> The NCAA explained that it considers both flooring options similar in regard to safety.

Women's volleyball stakeholders also raised concerns about being required to play on back-to-back nights in all rounds of the NCAA tournament, except during the semifinals and finals. One women's volleyball stakeholder noted, "This limits preparation and rest during the most critical part of the season." This issue was addressed on September 8, 2021, when the Competition Oversight Committee approved a request to add a rest day between the regional semifinals and finals of the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship.<sup>244</sup>

## 5. Gymnastics

Gymnastics presents unique considerations for the NCAA that are not dissimilar to those presented by volleyball. Women's gymnastics is showing "tremendous growth" with widespread sponsorship by colleges and universities, high television ratings on ABC, and well-known student-athletes.

***Championship structure and participation opportunities.*** There are 81 institutions that sponsor women's gymnastics.<sup>245</sup> Men's gymnastics, by contrast, has only 15 sponsored programs nationally.<sup>246</sup> As a result of these sponsorship differences, NC women's gymnastics has a significantly larger championship event, involving 36 of the 81 women's teams, as well as 28 additional student-athletes who independently qualify. Participants compete at regional rounds at four predetermined sites to qualify for the finals.<sup>247</sup> The men's championship is much smaller, involving only 12 teams and 35 individual qualifiers who participate in one qualifier competition (instead of multiple regional rounds) and then the finals.<sup>248</sup> Notably, the percentage of student-athletes who are able to participate in the championship is much higher on the men's side (80%) than on the women's (44.4%). Both championships have their own committees. The NC Men's

<sup>243</sup> *Clarifications on the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship*, NCAA (Apr. 9, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/clarifications-division-i-women-s-volleyball-championship>; *NCAA Responds to Volleyball Coaches' Concerns about Dressing Areas, Practice Courts for Tournament*, 3 News Now Omaha (Apr. 8, 2021), <https://www.3newsnow.com/sports/ncaa-responds-to-volleyball-coaches-concerns-about-dressing-areas-practice-courts-for-tournament>.

<sup>244</sup> *Committee Approves a Day of Rest at DI Women's Volleyball Regionals*, NCAA (Sept. 10, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/general-committee-approves-a-day-of-rest-at-di-womens-volleyball-regionals>.

<sup>245</sup> *Composition and Sport Sponsorship of the NCAA Membership*, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are/membership/composition-and-sport-sponsorship-membership>.

<sup>246</sup> *Id.*

<sup>247</sup> 2021 Women's National College Gymnastics Host Operations 2020-21 Manual at 41; *Road to the Championships*, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/gymnastics-women/nc/road-to-the-championship>.

<sup>248</sup> 2021 Men's National Collegiate Gymnastics Pre-Championships Manual.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

Gymnastics Committee has six members, and the NC Women's Gymnastics Committee has seven members.<sup>249</sup>

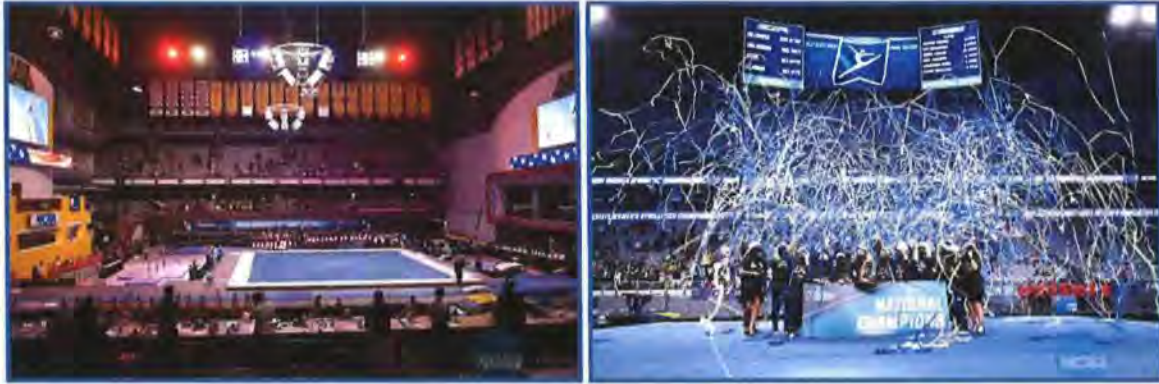


Photo of the 2021 NC Men's Gymnastics Championship (Left) and Women's Gymnastics Championship (Right)<sup>250</sup>

**Budget, spending, and staffing resources.** Due to its larger size, the NC women's championship requires—and receives—more resources from the NCAA. In 2019, for example, the NCAA spent approximately \$1,164,234 on the NC women's championship and approximately \$320,190 on the men's.<sup>251</sup> But the disparity in spending is not solely attributable to the larger size of the women's championship. The NCAA ends up spending more per student-athlete at the women's tournament (\$2,050 in 2019, \$1,934 in 2018) than at the men's (\$1,489 in 2019, \$1,423 in 2018).<sup>252</sup> The NCAA also dedicates more staff to the women's event who are responsible for the in-venue presentation, press and media coordination, and marketing, in addition to general operations.<sup>253</sup> As of 2020, the men's championship relied on a single NCAA championship manager (down from two managers in years prior).<sup>254</sup>

**Student-athlete experience.** Notwithstanding the difference in size, we received no feedback from student-athletes or external stakeholders about any differences in the student-athlete experience between the men's tournament and the women's. NCAA staff have reported that, overall, the women's tournament is “more enhanced” than the men's. That may be due, in part, to the increased corporate sponsor activations at the women's tournament.

**Broadcast coverage and in-person attendance.** It is undisputed that women's gymnastics has a larger fan base than men's gymnastics. The arena at the women's tournament, which is much

<sup>249</sup> See Men's Gymnastics Committee Roster, NCAA (last visited Oct. 13, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=MGY](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=MGY); Women's Gymnastics Committee Roster, NCAA (last visited Oct. 13, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=WGY](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=WGY).

<sup>250</sup> Images from the NCAA.

<sup>251</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>252</sup> *Id.*; NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2018.

<sup>253</sup> Championships and Alliances Staffing Allocation (as of Apr. 15, 2021); 2021-22 Tournament Operations Assignments.

<sup>254</sup> 2021-22 Tournament Operations Assignments; 2021-22 NCAA Championship Marketing and Ticketing Who to Contact; 2021-22 NCAA Media Coordination/Statistics Staff Who to Contact; 2021-22 NCAA Digital – Who to Contact.



larger than the men's, sold out for the finals in 2019. In fact, while the men's championship often sells at most 4,500 tickets, the women's championship sells up to 44,000 tickets.<sup>255</sup> This year, ESPN moved the broadcast of the final round of the women's championship to ABC, which coaches said "increased crowds and excitement."<sup>256</sup> The broadcast averaged 808,000 viewers, up 510% from 2019, and was the most-watched college gymnastics broadcast since 2011.<sup>257</sup> This increased exposure has resulted in more attention from corporate sponsors, leading in turn to the NCAA spending more time and resources on marketing and branding of the women's championship. The men's final championship round, by contrast, is livestreamed on NCAA.com or on the Big Ten Network.<sup>258</sup> Notwithstanding this growing popularity of the women's championship, neither the men's nor the women's championship has a fan festival.

**Other considerations.** Prior to this year, most Olympic gymnasts were not permitted to participate in the NCAA championships because they profited from their name, image, and likeness through sponsorship deals. Because the NCAA eligibility rules have now changed, household names in gymnastics will compete at the college level, including four female Olympic medalists—Gold Medalist and all-around champion Sunisa Lee, as well as Jordan Chiles, Jade Carey, and Grace McCallum—all of whom are set to compete in the NCAA championship next year.<sup>259</sup> With the addition of the world's best gymnasts to college competition, one coach hypothesized that "[w]omen's gymnastics has an opportunity to grow into a sport that rivals men's basketball."

## 6. Tennis

The NCAA staff who work on tennis and the broader college tennis community profess a deep commitment to ensuring gender equity in men's and women's tennis and take pride in being gender equity leaders. As one stakeholder noted, "tennis has had a good history of gender equity," with several of its key players vocally supporting the cause, including Billie Jean King, winner of 39 Grand Slam tournament titles.

In line with that commitment, the NCAA has taken specific steps to promote an equitable student-athlete experience at the Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championships, as set forth in further detail below. Stakeholders describe the cumulative effect of these decisions as a wholly equitable experience for student-athletes. One experienced stakeholder noted that he has "not observed any disparities" in the men's and women's tournaments "while attending the NCAA Tennis Championships on an annual basis."

<sup>255</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>256</sup> NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>257</sup> *Ratings: NCAA Gymnastics, Racing, MLS and More*, Sports Media Watch (Apr. 16, 2021), <https://www.sportsmediawatch.com/2021/04/ncaa-gymnastics-ratings-abc-most-watched-decade-f1-indycar-mls/>.

<sup>258</sup> NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>259</sup> Emily Giambalvo, *Olympic Gymnasts Used to Skip College to Make the Most of Their Fame. Now They Don't Have To*, Wash. Post (July 20, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/olympics/2021/07/20/olympic-gymnasts-nil/>.

***Tournament structure, venue, and participation opportunities.*** The structure of the Division I men's and women's championships is identical. Both are comprised of two components: a teams tournament and a singles and doubles tournament, which follows the team competition.<sup>260</sup> An equal number of men and women have an opportunity to compete in each component: 64 men's and women's teams comprised of nine players each in the teams tournament, 64 men's and women's singles players, and 32 men's and women's doubles teams.<sup>261</sup>

Starting in 2006, the NCAA moved to a single, joint site for the final rounds of the men's and women's team competition as well as all rounds of the singles and doubles competition.<sup>262</sup> That decision was motivated, in part, by a desire to provide women's tennis players with a more equitable experience. As one NCAA stakeholder expressed, this decision "effectively ended any gender equity problems."

The NCAA has taken yet other steps to ensure that it lives up to that sentiment. For example, it rotates which gender competes first each year at the championships. In odd years, student-athletes competing in the women's championship play first, resulting in an extra day off between the teams quarterfinals and semifinals, and in even years, the student-athletes competing in the men's championship play first and receive the extra day off.



*The 2019 Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championship Venue*<sup>263</sup>

***Spending.*** The NCAA spends roughly the same amount on both the men's and women's tournaments. In 2019, for example, total NCAA expenses for the men's championship were \$945,004, whereas total expenses for the women's championship were \$904,488, with a key

<sup>260</sup> 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Pre-Championships Manual.

<sup>261</sup> *Id.* at 12, 15.

<sup>262</sup> *Women's Tennis 2007 NCAA Women's Tennis Tournament 1st & 2nd Rounds*, Florida Gators (Dec. 10, 2015), [https://floridagators.com/sports/2015/12/10/\\_tennis\\_women\\_tour\\_ncaa\\_2007\\_p\\_overview.aspx](https://floridagators.com/sports/2015/12/10/_tennis_women_tour_ncaa_2007_p_overview.aspx).

<sup>263</sup> Image from the NCAA.



difference between the two being the cost of travel.<sup>264</sup> The NCAA spends the same amount on signage for both championships and virtually the same amount on gifts and mementos.<sup>265</sup>

**Staffing.** In recent years, Division I men's and women's tennis each have had their own championship manager, in addition to a single assistant coordinator who supports both championships.<sup>266</sup> For the upcoming championship in May 2022, however, staffing curtailments at the NCAA mean that one championship manager will oversee both the men's and women's events.

**Joint committee.** The NCAA has a single committee responsible for both Division I men's and Division I women's tennis. The 12-person Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Committee selects championship participants and develops the policies and procedures that govern the championships.<sup>267</sup> The NCAA mandates that half of this committee be made up of representatives of men's tennis interests and the other half be made up of representatives of women's tennis interests.<sup>268</sup> Each year the chair of the committee rotates between a committee member who represents men's tennis and a committee member who represents women's tennis. This committee structure helps to ensure that conversations occur between men's and women's tennis stakeholders and that championship planning decisions are made in concert. Moreover, while other championships may also have a joint committee for both genders, the tennis model is particularly noteworthy because the committee is comprised of an equal number of representatives of men's and women's tennis with a rotating chair.

**Corporate sponsorship, fan attendance, and broadcasting.** There is little to no corporate sponsorship at the men's or women's tennis tournaments, and the NCAA does not host a fan festival at either. There is also limited fan attendance at the tennis championships compared to some of the NCAA's marquee events. In 2019, for example, 6,562 people attended the finals of the Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championships, resulting in total ticket revenue of about \$93,700.<sup>269</sup>

There is also limited broadcasting of the men's and women's tennis championships. In 2021 and 2019, the Tennis Channel—a television network not related to ESPN—broadcast or streamed all of the matches in the men's and women's tournaments,<sup>270</sup> but in the years immediately

<sup>264</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019. Travel costs inevitably vary each year based on which teams/players make it into the championships and how expensive it is for those student-athletes and teams to travel to the championship venues.

<sup>265</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

<sup>266</sup> 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Championships Pre-Championships Manual.

<sup>267</sup> 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Committee Operations Manual.

<sup>268</sup> Division I Men's and Women's Tennis Committee, NCAA (lasted visited Oct. 19, 2021), [https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees\\_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=ITENNIS](https://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=ITENNIS).

<sup>269</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>270</sup> 2021 NCAA Coverage, USTA National Campus (May 13, 2021), <https://www.ustanationalcampus.com/en/home/news/2021-ncaa-coverage.html>; NCAA Tennis Championships Come to Tennis Channel with 3-Year Agreement, Tennis (May 7, 2019), <https://www.tennis.com/news/articles/ncaa-tennis-championships-come-to-tennis-channel-with-3-year-agreement>.

prior, all matches, except the men's and women's tennis teams finals in 2017, were streamed only on NCAA.com.<sup>271</sup> Since the broadcast agreement with the Tennis Channel has been in place, the NCAA has worked with the Tennis Channel to ensure that each gender has equal television airtime.

## 7. Swimming & Diving

Stakeholders have overwhelmingly described the Division I Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Championships as providing student-athletes with a gender equitable experience. One stakeholder reported that there are "minimal to no differences in championship events that the NCAA runs for Division I Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving." A coach who has "experience going to and coaching at both events" commented that "the men's and women's NCAA Swimming & Diving Championships are pretty equitable." Most strikingly, the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America contacted nearly 200 coaches and administrators who had attended both the men's and women's championships since 2016, and they noted that in swimming "our coaches report that there is no measurable difference between the men's and women's championship experiences," aside from some concerns raised about insufficient participation opportunities for men.

**Championship structure and venue.** The championships occur consecutively, with women's swimming and diving taking place first and men's swimming and diving taking place the following week. About half the time, the championships are held back-to-back at the same site. For example, in 2022, both championships will be held at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. The other half of the time, the championships are held at separate sites. For example, in 2023, the women's championship will be held at the University of Tennessee, and the men's will be held at the University of Minnesota.<sup>272</sup>

When the championships are held at the same venue, both the men's and women's athletes use the same pool and facilities, guaranteeing a similar experience across genders. As one coach put it, when the Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Committee "select[s] the same venues for championships," that "alleviate[s] any previous concerns regarding access for the best-possible venues." One challenge with hosting the championships at the same venue is that only a handful of facilities can be closed to the public for that long a period of time (two weeks). So although some stakeholders expressed that "[h]aving the men's and women's championship at the same venue would be ideal," they also recognized that it is often "difficult" to do so.

<sup>271</sup> NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>272</sup> 2021-2026 Championships Dates and Sites for NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), [https://s3.amazonaws.com/ncaaorg/championships/sports/swimdiv/d1/2020-21D1XSW\\_2021-26ChampionshipsDatesandSites.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ncaaorg/championships/sports/swimdiv/d1/2020-21D1XSW_2021-26ChampionshipsDatesandSites.pdf).



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II



2021 Men's and Women's Swimming Championship (Greensboro Aquatic Center)<sup>273</sup>

Even in years when the championships take place at different venues, the NCAA staff report that the staff and the Division I Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Committee work to ensure that disparities are "minimized as much as possible." They do so by working with championship hosts to sell a similar number of tickets to each event, to provide equal access to pools for practice, and to provide similar locker rooms, snacks, and gear. The schedule for swimming and diving for both the men's and the women's championships are identical, no matter the location.<sup>274</sup>



Signage at 2019 Division I Swimming and Diving Championships (Austin, TX)<sup>275</sup>

Unlike sports with back-to-back championships that alternate the order of the championships, the Division I Women's Swimming and Diving Championship always takes place before the men's. Although women-first sequencing has generated debate in connection with other sports (*e.g.*, golf), stakeholders shared that women's swimming and diving coaches are "supportive

<sup>273</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>274</sup> See 2021 Division I Swimming & Diving Championships Pre-Championships Manual at 26-27.

<sup>275</sup> Image from the NCAA.

of [] going first” and, in fact, “like to go first.” This is in part because the women’s championship does not overlap with the later rounds of March Madness; in 2022, for example, the women’s championship will primarily occur during the first weekend of March Madness, whereas the men’s championship will primarily occur during the Sweet Sixteen.<sup>276</sup> In addition, going first gives the female swimmers and divers the benefit of a “fresh facility” where “no one is worn out yet.” Stakeholders have not advocated for combining the men’s and women’s championships into a single event, believing instead that “each event can stand on its own.”

**Budget and spending.** The men’s and women’s championships have similar budgets, although the men’s championship spends more per student-athlete when accounting for the greater number of women’s participants.<sup>277</sup> In 2019, the NCAA spent a total of \$994,154 on the men’s championship, with 270 male student-athletes, while spending \$975,579 on the women’s championship, with 322 student-athletes.<sup>278</sup> That equates to \$3,682 per male student-athlete and \$3,030 per female student-athlete. Team travel costs are the biggest variable in the expenses between the genders, and those costs vary each year based on which teams qualify and where the regional and championship rounds are held.<sup>279</sup>

Many elements of the championships that impact the student-athlete experience—including signage, apparel, promotion, and awards and mementos—have nearly identical spending for the men and the women. For example, in 2019, the NCAA spent \$66,017 (\$245 per student-athlete) on awards, mementos, and gifts at the men’s championship, whereas the NCAA spent \$77,565 (\$241 per student-athlete) on awards, mementos, and gifts at the women’s championship.<sup>280</sup> Trophies and participant medallions are also equitable based on student-athlete participation, with more participant gifts corresponding to the larger number of women student-athletes in the championship. That same year, the NCAA spent nearly identical amounts on signage (\$8,900 for the men’s championship and \$9,440 for the women’s).<sup>281</sup> These similarities in

<sup>276</sup> See 2021-2026 Championships Dates and Sites for NCAA Division I Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), [https://s3.amazonaws.com/ncaaorg/championships/sports/swimdiv/d1/2020-21D1XSW\\_2021-26ChampionshipsDatesandSites.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ncaaorg/championships/sports/swimdiv/d1/2020-21D1XSW_2021-26ChampionshipsDatesandSites.pdf); Future Division I Men’s Basketball Championship Sites, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021) <https://www.ncaa.org/championships/future-division-i-mens-basketball-championship-sites>.

<sup>277</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>278</sup> *Id.*; 2019 Division I Swimming & Diving Championships Host Operations Manual at 6.

<sup>279</sup> For example, in 2019, despite having similar travel policies, the men’s championship spent more than the women’s championship on travel (\$369,600 versus \$352,000). As the NCAA coordinator for the men’s and women’s championships explained, “Team travel is going to be the biggest variable in the expenses between the genders because of the difference in field size and which teams and individuals qualify (e.g. maybe there are more drivable women’s participants than men’s participants in a given year so even though there may be more women that qualify, if there are more men flying because they are further away from the final site, the expense could be higher for men or if charters are involved that can be a factor in the difference as well).” This dynamic is not unique to swimming and diving.

<sup>280</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021. As explained above, see pp. 44-46, figures for both total and per student-athlete spending on awards, mementos, and gifts allow for imprecise comparisons of differently sized sports because spending varies by championship round. The most significant portion of the award and mementos budget in swimming and diving goes to the award given to race winners, of which there is a similar number despite the overall greater size of the women’s championship. The winners at both the men’s and women’s events receive the same awards.

<sup>281</sup> *Id.*



spending provide for a more equitable student-athlete experience. As one stakeholder who helps organize the championships wrote, “travel and per diem policies are the same”; trophies and mementos are “the same”; and the marketing, tickets, promotions, event presentation, and signage “are identical,” especially “in the years the championships are at the same venue back-to-back weeks.”

**Staffing.** The men’s and women’s championships also have similar staffing. Prior to 2021, there was one championship manager and one assistant coordinator assigned to each championship. Following pandemic-related staffing reductions in 2021, there is now a single championship manager and a single assistant coordinator assigned to oversee both championships. Having staff that oversee both the men’s and women’s events does facilitate streamlined championship planning and communication with the Division I Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Committee. But concerns have been raised that the single manager will be stretched thin when the two championships are held at different sites. As one committee member noted, using a single manager “absolutely makes sense if the venue is the same for both championships. It does not make sense if the venues are different. You need a dedicated NCAA contact for each championship for different venues.”

**Joint committee.** There is a single men’s and women’s swimming and diving committee that “functions as one committee in every aspect of decision-making for the championships.” Numerous stakeholders—including NCAA staff, coaches, and committee members—noted that the joint Division I Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Committee serves to advance gender equity by facilitating better communication, planning, and execution of the championships.

As one NCAA staff member suggested, “Having one committee helps ensure gender equity as the committee is involved in all decisions affecting both championships and also staff both championships.” Coaches similarly commented that “[s]wimming and diving benefit from having a shared committee structure,” which “ensures consistency and fairness between the two championships.” And as one committee member said, “As a committee that represents both the men’s and the women’s championship, I believe we are doing the best we can to provide the same experience for both genders.”

**Broadcast coverage and in-person attendance.** The men’s and women’s championships currently have identical broadcast coverage on ESPN. Although there have been years where the women’s championship received more linear coverage than the men’s championship, ESPN3 covered all sessions of both championships equally in 2021.<sup>282</sup> The NCAA broadcast staff has requested that ESPN continue this identical coverage in future years.

<sup>282</sup> See NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

Attendance at the men's and women's championships is also similar. In 2019, when the championships were held at the same venue, total ticket sales were 4,562.<sup>283</sup> And in 2018, the men sold 2,130 tickets whereas the women sold 2,626 tickets.<sup>284</sup>

**Other considerations.** Stakeholders raised one common concern about the swimming and diving championships: that there are fewer total participation opportunities for men student-athletes than there are for women student-athletes. As one stakeholder noted, “[t]he women have more advantages. . . . They have a bigger championship field.” Similarly, the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association noted that after contacting nearly 200 coaches and administrators who had attended both the men's and women's championships since 2016, “[a]lmost every single respondent (both male and female) noted the glaring disparity in access between male and female participants.”

Indeed, there are more female student-athletes participating in the championship, but that appears to reflect the fact that there are currently more schools sponsoring women's swimming and diving. There are 270 participants at the men's championship (235 swimmers and 35 divers) and 132 men's programs (with 3,757 total swimmers and divers).<sup>285</sup> There are 322 participants at the women's championship (281 swimmers and 41 divers) and 193 women's programs (with 5,755 total swimmers and divers).<sup>286</sup> That means that approximately 7.2% of Division I men's swimmers and divers are able to participate in the men's championship, whereas 5.6% of Division I women's swimmers and divers are able to participate in the women's championship. In other words, although more female swimmers and divers participate overall in the championship, a higher percentage of male swimmers and divers are able to participate in the championship.

## 8. Soccer

Stakeholders reported that the Division I Men's and Women's Soccer Championships, which culminate in the men's and women's four-team College Cups, provide equitable experiences for their student-athletes. Regular communication between NCAA staff and equitable budget allocations have resulted in similarly planned and executed events. As one stakeholder put it, “The student-athletes in Men's and Women's Soccer are treated similarly by the NCAA and the staff who serve the championship.”

<sup>283</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>284</sup> *Id.*

<sup>285</sup> See 2021 Division I Swimming & Diving Championships Pre-Championships Manual at 14.

<sup>286</sup> See *id.*





Photo of the 2020 Division I Women's Soccer Championship Game<sup>287</sup>

**Championship structure, venue, and participation opportunities.** The Division I soccer championships hold preliminary and quarterfinal games at campus sites,<sup>288</sup> with the College Cups often rotating among repeat venues, including WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, North Carolina; PayPal Park in San Jose, California; Stevens Stadium in Santa Clara, California; and Harder Stadium in Santa Barbara, California.<sup>289</sup> The men's and women's College Cups are most often, but not always, held at different venues from one another.<sup>290</sup>

This year, because the men's host canceled due to the pandemic, the Division I Men's and Women's College Cups were held at the same venue, at the same time. One athletic director who attended this year's combined College Cup described it as "awesome" and "a celebration of soccer." According to other stakeholders, rather than emphasizing disparities between the two genders, "the 2020-2021 College Cup . . . highlight[ed] the ability to create and reimagine a new tournament format." With the College Cups being held together, coaches reported that the tournaments were a "phenomenal, shared experience that opened the possibility for future collaborations."

With the exception of the most recent championships, the men's and women's tournaments are typically offset by one week.<sup>291</sup> Whether the College Cups are held at the same venue or time,

<sup>287</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>288</sup> Road to the Championship, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/soccer-women/d1/road-to-the-championship>.

<sup>289</sup> *Id.*; Road to the Championship, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/soccer-men/d1/road-to-the-championship>; Championship History, Women's Soccer, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/soccer-women/d1>; Championship History, Men's Soccer, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/soccer-men/d1>.

<sup>290</sup> Championship History, Women's Soccer, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/soccer-women/d1>; Championship History, Men's Soccer, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/soccer-men/d1>.

<sup>291</sup> Road to the Championship, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/soccer-women/d1/road-to-the-championship> (noting championship will be held December 3 and 5, 2021); Road to the Championship, NCAA (last visited

stakeholders have reported that the NCAA maintains gender equity between the men's and women's events.

Some differences exist, however. Notably, due to significantly more sponsorship at member institutions, the Division I women's tournament has a 64-team bracket, with 19.1% of women's soccer teams able to participate, as compared with the men's 48-team bracket, with 23.5% of men's teams able to participate.<sup>292</sup> Because both tournaments take place over the course of three weeks, more games are played during the same amount of time at the women's tournament than at the men's.<sup>293</sup>

**Budget and spending.** The NCAA spent approximately \$2.37 million in 2018 and \$2.4 million in 2019 on the Division I men's tournament, and approximately \$2.83 million in 2018 and \$3.49 million in 2019 on the women's.<sup>294</sup> The primary source of the difference in the total spend is the difference in the size of the championships: the women's soccer championship has 64 teams (compared with the men's 48), and therefore significantly more student-athletes, requiring additional spending on awards, gifts and mementos, per diem, travel, and overall game expenses.<sup>295</sup> When examined per student-athlete, spending is similar. In 2019, the NCAA spent on average \$2,392 per student-athlete at the men's tournament, and \$2,477 per student-athlete at the women's tournament.<sup>296</sup>

Even though the NCAA spends a similar amount on men's and women's soccer student-athletes, spending within particular budget categories is not always the same. For example, despite its smaller size, the men's championship spent about \$18,000 more than the women's championship on signage in 2018; spent \$14,000 more on signage in 2019; and has \$12,000 more budgeted to spend on signage in 2022.<sup>297</sup> (Breaking the trend, the women's tournament spent \$3,000 more on signage than the men's tournament in 2021, although the College Cups were in the same location at the same time, meaning that the signage overlapped.)<sup>298</sup> The likely reason for this disparity is the NCAA's stagnant budgets; NCAA staff posit that the staff planning the men's championship likely allocated more spending for signage at the men's tournament than the

Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/championships/soccer-men/d1/road-to-the-championship> (noting championship will be held December 10 and 12, 2021).

<sup>292</sup> More institutions sponsor Division I women's soccer (335 teams) than Division I men's soccer (204 teams). See Composition and Sport Sponsorship of the NCAA Membership (as of September 1, 2020), NCAA (last visited Sept. 28, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are/membership/composition-and-sport-sponsorship-membership>.

<sup>293</sup> 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025 NCAA Men's College Cup, NCAA Site Selection Process at 5; 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025 NCAA Women's College Cup, NCAA Site Selection Process at 5.

<sup>294</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>295</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

<sup>296</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>297</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021; Championship Budgets for Fiscal Year Ending 2022.

<sup>298</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.



women's many years ago, which has been carried over year-to-year without any attention being paid to the disparity. Current NCAA staff acknowledge that this discrepancy should be revisited.

***Committees and staffing.*** One of the key elements identified as contributing to the soccer championships' gender equity is frequent communication among NCAA staff members. According to one NCAA staff member, the managers for women's and men's soccer stay in contact during the championship planning process, although the communication could still be improved. And before the women's soccer manager assumed her position, the Division I men's soccer manager oversaw both championships for a period of time. Contributing to these open lines of communication are the Division I Men's and Women's Soccer Committees, which have at least one joint meeting per year focused on championship planning.

***Fan attendance and sponsorship.*** Women's college soccer is undoubtedly growing in popularity, just as the popularity of the United States Women's National Team has skyrocketed in recent years. This is reflected in increasing audience sizes, both in person (attendance for the entire tournament increased 43% between 2019 and 2021) and at home (television viewership of the final game increased 56% between 2018 and 2019, although was down from 2017).<sup>299</sup> Similarly, while both the men's and women's championships have a fan festival, Champions and Partners, including Buffalo Wild Wings, Buick, Capital One, Coca-Cola, Pizza Hut, Unilever, and Wilson, activate at higher rates at the women's tournament than at the men's.

***Other considerations.*** Separately, United Soccer Coaches raised a concern that seeding for the Division I women's tournament results in the same teams playing each other every year, which "really affects the student-athlete experience." The NCAA's seeding policies for men's and women's soccer are stated somewhat differently in their respective championship manuals: both championships seed 16 teams chosen by the committee (at the men's, 33% of the teams, and at the women's, 25%), with the women's tournament placing the top 16 seeds into "pods of four," which the men's manual does not state that it does.<sup>300</sup>

## 9. Golf

The NCAA staff and the Division I Men's and Women's Golf Committees have made significant, concerted efforts to provide equitable experiences for student-athletes participating in the Division I Men's and Women's Golf Championships, although some challenges remain, especially in the regional events. Many stakeholders—including student-athletes, NCAA staff, members of the Division I committees, and coaches—suggested that those efforts have resulted in championships that are largely equitable. As various stakeholders observed, "I do not see any significant difference in how the championships are run," "[m]en's and women's golf are very much in lock step with each other," and "they are identical championships." In fact, one NCAA

<sup>299</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>300</sup> 2019 Division I Men's Soccer Championship, Pre-Championship Manual at 13; 2020 Division I Women's Soccer Championship, Pre-Championship Manual at 13.

committee member said, “From my perspective, they are viewed as one large golf championship—one held one week and one held the next week for the two genders.”

**Championship structure, venue, and participation opportunities.** The golf championship finals occur at the same venue, on the same course, and use many of the same facilities in back-to-back weeks. In 2021, 2022, and 2023, for example, the finals for the men’s and the women’s championships will be held at the Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona.<sup>301</sup>

Sharing facilities and other resources allows for comparable championship experiences for male and female student-athletes. One interviewee stated, “They use the same facility, same hotel, same locker room, all of those things you know are going to be the exact same from week one to week two.” Another observed, “I do not notice differences between the NCAA men’s and women’s golf championships—I am sure due in large part because the championships are held back to back weeks at the same golf course [and] staying at the same hotel.” And yet another noted, “Whether it’s facilities, food, practice facilities, it’s all pretty equitable.” Although some coaches expressed concern that always holding the women’s championship the week before the men’s made the women’s event feel as if it served as “a test run,” other stakeholders suggested that the women’s teams benefited “from a course conditions standpoint,” as the jointly used course is in better shape during the first week of play.



2021 Division I Men's and Women's Golf Championship (Scottsdale, Arizona)<sup>302</sup>

<sup>301</sup> 2021 Division I Women's Golf Championships Pre-Championship Manual at 8-9; 2021 Division I Men's Golf Championships Pre-Championship Manual at 8-9.

<sup>302</sup> Image from the NCAA.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

The NCAA staff and committee members consider whether particular golf courses work for both men and women when selecting host sites—considering, for example, the contours and topography of the course and whether the course will allow the men and women to use the same iron to reach the greens. And once a venue is selected, the staff, committees, and host work to reduce any disparities that may exist between the men’s and women’s facilities. For example, because some golf courses cater more towards men than women, the locker room and restroom facilities for the men may be larger or nicer than for the women. The NCAA golf staff and hosts will work to address such a disparity: “[I]f the men’s locker room is larger they’ll switch it so women can use [the] men’s locker room . . . signage was swapped out, we had temporary signage, trying to provide the same experience even in terms of those facilities.”



*2021 Division I Men’s and Women’s Golf Championship, Grayhawk Golf Club*<sup>303</sup>

The NCAA uses many of the same regional sites for the men and women as well. This, too, helps minimize disparities between regional events, although there are issues relating to the number of regional sites, as discussed more below. The men’s six regional sites have 75 participants each, and 156 men advance to the final (30 five-person teams, and six individuals from non-qualifying teams).<sup>304</sup> The women’s four regional sites have 96 participants each, and 132 women advance to the final (24 five-person teams, and 12 individuals from non-qualifying teams).<sup>305</sup> The difference in the number of participants is a product of the difference in the number

<sup>303</sup> Image from the NCAA.

<sup>304</sup> 2021 Division I Men’s Golf Championships Pre-Championship Manual at 11.

<sup>305</sup> 2021 Division I Women’s Golf Championships Pre-Championship Manual at 12. Note, as discussed below, the NCAA plans to expand the Division I women’s golf regionals from four sites with 18 teams and six individuals to six sites with 12 teams and six

of Division I schools that sponsor men's and women's golf. Approximately 27% of men's teams (81 of 298) and 27% of women's teams (72 of 266) participate in the Division I golf championships.

**Budget and spending.** For the championship finals, the men and women generally have identical facilities, celebratory banquets, and other ancillary events. They also generally receive identical mementos and equipment (e.g., scoresheets, pin flags, practice balls). Much of the signage at the championship—including posters and flagsticks—are shared and say “Division I Golf Championships,” rather than specifying the men's or women's championship.



*Signage at the 2021 Division I Men's and Women's Golf Championships*<sup>306</sup>

In fact, the men's and women's finals budgets are not only similar, but fungible in some respects. As NCAA staff explained, “From a planning perspective you're able to pool together your money and make it stretch more in terms of signage budget and other types of experiences that might otherwise be half as much. I think it just allows you to do more and provide the same experience for both genders and pool funding.”

The overall budgets for the men's and women's championships are largely equitable but not identical, mostly due to the fact that the men's championship has more participants than the women's and has six regional sites instead of the women's four. For example, the NCAA spent the following total amounts on the men's and women's championships:

individuals in 2022. Accordingly, the women's championship will move from the current 384 total participants to 396 total participants, as reflected in the Golf Fact Sheet, *see* p. 133.

<sup>306</sup> Images from the NCAA.



**Total NCAA Spending at the Golf Championships<sup>307</sup>**

YEAR	MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP	WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP
2019	\$1,014,937	\$989,727
2018	\$845,434	\$813,119

The greater number of participants and regional sites for the men's championship generally increases the men's costs for per diem and travel, although the travel cost varies year to year based on the location of the regional sites. For example, the NCAA spent the following amount on team travel and per diems for the championships:

**NCAA Spending on Travel and Per Diem<sup>308</sup>**

YEAR	MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP	WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP
2019	\$205,700 (travel); \$203,625 (per diem)	\$218,563 (travel); \$185,925 (per diem)
2018	\$196,294 (travel); \$206,850 (per diem)	\$183,814 (travel); \$180,975 (per diem)

On a per-athlete basis, however, championship spending is similar, except for yearly differences in travel, which can result in slightly higher travel costs for the women's championship. For example, the NCAA spent the following amount per-athlete at the Division I golf championships:

**Per Student-Athlete Spending at the Golf Championships**

YEAR	MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP	WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP
2019	\$2,255	\$2,577
2018	\$1,879	\$2,117

**Staffing and committees.** There is equitable staffing between Division I men's and women's golf, in addition to well-established communication lines between NCAA staff members and the Division I Men's and Women's Golf Committees. As a committee member confirmed, there has been "really strong collaboration between the two committees for years." Prior to 2021, each of the championships had its own championship manager, support staffer, and media coordinator, as well as one shared branding staff member and one shared broadcast liaison. Following a staff reduction for the 2021 championships, both the men's and women's golf championships now share a single NCAA championship manager. As the NCAA staff noted,

<sup>307</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019; NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2018.

<sup>308</sup> NCAA Comparison of Game Expenses for Other Championships 2015 to 2021.

having a single NCAA championship manager not only facilitates “one person trying to keep [both championships] as consistent as [they] can be,” but also means that the one staff member is “working with both committees, so if the women’s committee is talking about something [they can] communicate that to the men’s committee.”

**Broadcast and marketing.** The two championships are also broadcast and marketed similarly. For example, both the men’s and women’s championship spend the same amount on general promotion (in 2021, \$13,945 each; in 2019, \$0 each; and in 2018, \$8,083 each),<sup>309</sup> and both championship finals are aired live on the Golf Channel (which is not governed by the NCAA’s agreement with ESPN).<sup>310</sup> Which championship has greater television viewership changes year to year. One committee member observed, “I have not noticed any differences in the promotion, sponsorship, marketing or branding and broadcasting opportunities for men’s and women’s NCAA Golf Championships.”

**Other considerations.** Despite golf’s overall gender equity, stakeholders identified two specific issues, both of which the NCAA staff and committees have worked to address.

First, there is the disparity in the number of regional sites: six for the men and four for the women. This gives the men “more flexibility when you have weather issues—not as many people on the golf course, fewer teams on the field, gives you better flexibility.” Similarly, having 96 participants at each women’s regional site (as opposed to 75 at the men’s) does not allow “as much flexibility or as streamlined of a playing experience as is recommended by golf organizations.” It was noted that having six regional sites for women would improve the “pace of play” and increase “access to the driving range for practice.”

The NCAA has resolved this disparity starting with the 2022 championship. On August 4, 2021, the Division I Women’s Golf Committee recommended expansion from four to six regional sites, with each regional provided “a stipend of \$23,667, which is equivalent to the stipend provided to men’s regional hosts.”<sup>311</sup> The Competition Oversight Committee considered this recommendation at its September 8, 2021 meeting, and then on September 17 approved “expanding the Division I women’s golf regionals from four sites with 18 teams and six individuals to six sites with 12 teams and six individuals, effective for the 2022 NCAA regionals.”<sup>312</sup> As we understand it, this expansion will now be presented by the SVP of Championships to the Chief Financial Officer, Division I Finance Committee, and NCAA President for final approval.

Second, multiple stakeholders raised concerns about the NCAA’s decision to cancel a women’s regional tournament in its entirety this year due to inclement weather. One stakeholder questioned, “if this were men’s golf would we have done something to get golf in? Extend to additional days of play, travel to another golf course in the region?” A student-athlete affected by

<sup>309</sup> *Id.*

<sup>310</sup> See NCAA TV Broadcast Schedule, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>.

<sup>311</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Women’s Golf Committee (Aug. 4, 2021).

<sup>312</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee (Sept. 17, 2021).



the cancellation expressed a similar sentiment: “I cannot help but wonder that if this were a male championship, would more have been done to allow the student-athletes to play through unideal conditions.”

The Division I Women’s Golf Committee discussed this issue on four separate occasions during the summer of 2021 and proposed several changes in response. First, the committee “directed staff to update manuals to reflect the expectation for maintenance staff to be on site during all hours needed throughout all rounds of the championships, and especially in situations involving inclement weather” and to “update bid specifications for future championships to ensure clarity regarding expectations for course maintenance.”<sup>313</sup> Second, the committee voted to allow scheduling flexibility when conducting regionals in inclement weather (96.3% of coaches surveyed by the committee supported this adjustment), including that “the committee will allow competition to begin as early as Sunday afternoon at future regional sites.”<sup>314</sup> The committee also noted that the aforementioned shift to six regional sites “would allow for additional flexibility in inclement weather situations.”<sup>315</sup>

And third, the committee recommended adjusting the inclement weather policy “to require a minimum of 36 holes to be completed at regionals for advancement to the national championships, an increase from a minimum of 18 holes under the current policy.”<sup>316</sup> In other words, student-athletes now have to play more golf in regional rounds to qualify for the final round; if inclement weather requires cancellation of a regional round before 36 holes are completed, then instead of using the few rounds of golf already played in the regional round to decide who advances, the NCAA will look to regular season performance.<sup>317</sup> This proposal had overwhelming support from coaches (84.9% of coaches surveyed by the women’s committee supported the adjustment) because “one 18-hole round of golf should not override an entire season’s body of work made up of dozens of competition rounds.”<sup>318</sup> On October 4, 2021, the Competition Oversight Committee approved this policy adjustment and also noted that the change “aligns more closely with policies in place for men’s golf.”<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> *Id.*

<sup>314</sup> *Id.*

<sup>315</sup> *Id.*

<sup>316</sup> *Id.*

<sup>317</sup> Indeed, according to the current policy, “[i]f a minimum of 36 holes cannot be completed, the top-seeded teams and top-seeded individuals not on an advancing team will advance to the championships.” Report of the NCAA Competition Oversight Committee (Oct. 4, 2021).

<sup>318</sup> Report of the NCAA Division I Women’s Golf Committee (June 30, July 14 and 26, Aug. 4, 2021).

<sup>319</sup> See Report of the Competition Oversight Committee (Oct. 4, 2021).

## SINGLE-GENDER SPORTS

The NCAA hosts championships for six Division I and National Championship single-gender sports. Two of these are men-only (football and wrestling), and the other four are women-only (beach volleyball, bowling, field hockey, and rowing). The men-only sports have generally been sponsored by the NCAA for far longer and, in the aggregate, receive significantly more financial and staffing support than the four women-only championships. For example, for 2018-19, the NCAA spent approximately \$2,229 more per student-athlete for the men-only championships than for the women-only championships (\$5,282 per student-athlete for the men and \$3,053 per student-athlete for the women).

The men-only sports have a significant head-start on the women-only sports, enabling them to become better established with substantial fan bases. For example, wrestling had its first NCAA championship more than 50 years before women's field hockey and 88 years before beach volleyball. Yet some of these women-only sports are rapidly growing, creating a need for more resources year over year.

Although the NCAA has made efforts to invest more in some of these women-only championships, most notably beach volleyball, resources for expansion of participation opportunities and overall improvements in the student-athlete experience are limited for all sports at the NCAA, and these women-only sports are no exception. Such resource limitations can have a more fundamental impact on growing sports with growing needs, like some of the women-only sports discussed below, potentially holding them back from developing into more well-established sports.

### 1. Men-Only Sports

**Football.** Unique among NCAA sports, NCAA Division I football has been split into two divisions since 1978, now referred to as the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS).<sup>320</sup> The FCS Championship is operated by the NCAA, but the championship for the more competitive FBS is operated independently. A more modest event in terms of both spending and revenue generation, the FCS Championship generated \$5,763,917 in revenue in 2019, and expenses for the NCAA totaled \$7,137,685, or \$4,889 spent per student-athlete.<sup>321</sup>

Because the NCAA operates only one of the two Division I football championships, it is difficult to compare that championship to other single-gender sports with a single Division I championship. Nevertheless, it is notable that although the FCS Championship is not the premier

<sup>320</sup> Daniel Wilco, *FCS Championship: Everything You Need to Know*, NCAA (Jan. 13, 2020), <https://www.ncaa.com/news/football/article/2020-01-11/fcs-championship-everything-you-need-know>.

<sup>321</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.



Division I football championship and does not produce net revenue for the NCAA, the NCAA devotes substantial resources to the FCS. For the 2021-22 season, the NCAA has budgeted \$3,514 in funding per student-athlete, more than any women-only championship except beach volleyball.<sup>322</sup>

**Wrestling.** Wrestling—which became an NCAA championship in 1928<sup>323</sup>—is the only men-only sport for which the NCAA operates the primary Division I championship, as well as the only revenue-producing single-gender sport, and it therefore presents unique considerations.<sup>324</sup>

Division I wrestling is a net revenue generator for the NCAA. In 2019, the Division I Wrestling Championship generated a total of \$5,887,919, which, after expenses, results in net earnings of \$3,570,700.<sup>325</sup> Because the Division I Wrestling Championship is a revenue-producing event with a large audience, requiring a substantial venue, is broadcast, and has corporate partner activations, the NCAA devotes significant resources to its operation.

Even though student-athlete participation has been declining, the Division I Wrestling Championship budget has increased in recent years, from \$1,158,056 in 2014-15 to \$1,460,393 in 2020-21, likely due to wrestling's continued and increasing revenue-producing status.<sup>326</sup> Division I wrestling has a substantial per student-athlete budget. For the upcoming 2021-22 championship, the NCAA has budgeted approximately \$4,106.65 per student-athlete.<sup>327</sup>

## 2. Women-Only Sports

**Beach volleyball.** Beach volleyball is a relatively new but rapidly growing women-only sport. It was added as an Emerging Sport for Women in 2010 and held its first NC championship in 2016.<sup>328</sup> In 2016, there were 47 sponsored teams and 758 total student-athletes in Division I; by the 2018-19 season, those numbers were 60 and 1,053 respectively.<sup>329</sup> The tournament was broadcast on TBS in 2016 and 2017, and ESPN became a broadcast partner in 2018 and now broadcasts every match of the three-day, eight-team double elimination tournament on ESPNU and ESPN2, with the final match played on ESPN. In 2016, 288,000 households and an estimated 734,400 viewers tuned in to the final match; those numbers increased to 345,000 households and 879,750 estimated viewers by 2019. In the same period, ticket sales increased from approximately

<sup>322</sup> *Id.*

<sup>323</sup> NCAA Timeline, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/history>.

<sup>324</sup> Women's wrestling was approved as an Emerging Sport for Women in 2020.

<sup>325</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>326</sup> Championships Budgets 2015 to 2021; Championships Budgets 2022.

<sup>327</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>328</sup> NCAA Timeline, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/history>.

<sup>329</sup> 2019-20 Sponsorship & Participation Rates Report.

2,818 to 4,198 tickets, increasing NCAA ticket revenue from \$92,333 in 2016 to \$199,755 in 2019.<sup>330</sup>

The beach volleyball championship is held in Gulf Shores, Alabama each year.<sup>331</sup> According to stakeholders, the city invests approximately \$400,000 annually in the tournament.

Beach volleyball stakeholders reported that the NCAA has devoted significant resources to marketing and promotion, noting the organization “actively market[s] ticket sales and work[s] with Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism to direct fans to accommodations,” and that the NCAA staff work tirelessly to plan and operate the championship. The NCAA has budgeted \$5,289 per participant for the 2022 championship, among the highest of any NCAA sport, and in 2018-19 spent \$10,275 per student-athlete.<sup>332</sup> However, the NCAA has not funded a bracket expansion sufficient to keep up with beach volleyball’s rapid growth.

When the NCAA initially funded an eight-team beach volleyball bracket in 2016, it included one bid for every seven sponsored teams, a roughly average access ratio for NCAA sports. However, due to its rapid growth, the same eight-team bracket now only allows for one bid for every 10.5 teams, a lower access ratio than any other NCAA team sport.<sup>333</sup> Beach volleyball sought a bracket expansion beginning in 2018, when the number of sponsored teams had reached 68 and five conferences had enough sponsorship to qualify for an automatic bid in the tournament (although none were granted due to the limited bracket size). In 2019, beach volleyball’s request for a bracket expansion was again rejected; instead, a request from women’s bowling, which had reached the sponsorship threshold for expansion earlier than beach volleyball, was approved.<sup>334</sup> To date, beach volleyball has not had its request for a bracket increase approved.

In five short years, women’s beach volleyball has demonstrated its potential to be a popular and potentially revenue-producing sport for the NCAA. However, only with the room—and the resources—to grow, will beach volleyball be able to reach its full potential.

**Bowling.** In its inaugural NCAA championship year in 2004,<sup>335</sup> NC women’s bowling had 42 sponsor teams and 358 total student-athletes across all three divisions. By the 2019-20 season, those numbers had risen to 87 and 820, respectively.<sup>336</sup> Bowling stakeholders expressed that the NCAA has invested significantly in the growth of women’s bowling in the last several years, including by instituting automatic qualifying and approving a 2019 bracket expansion. Currently,

<sup>330</sup> Championship Attendance Summary 2015 to Present.

<sup>331</sup> 2021 National Collegiate Beach Volleyball Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 8-9.

<sup>332</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019; Championship Budgets 2022.

<sup>333</sup> 2019-20 Sponsorship & Participation Rates Report (noting 84 sponsor teams overall in beach volleyball in 2019-20).

<sup>334</sup> CFO Notification FY20.

<sup>335</sup> NCAA Timeline, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/history>.

<sup>336</sup> 2019-20 Sponsorship & Participation Rates Report.



92 institutions sponsor bowling teams, and the championship accommodates 16 of them. The NCAA has budgeted \$2,942 per student-athlete for 2021-22.<sup>337</sup>

While pleased with the championship's growth, stakeholders expressed concern about the quality of the venues hosting the NCAA women's bowling championships. Typically, the championships are held in outdated bowling centers that are not designed for spectators. Often, the venues do not even close to the public for the duration of the tournament, meaning customers use the lanes in the evening and can cause damage that impacts championship play the following day. Only once, in 2017, was the championship held in a large arena—the Baton Rouge convention center—and stakeholders reported a substantially improved championship experience for student-athletes that year. Additionally, stakeholders explained that the NCAA does not provide commentators for any of the tournament rounds streamed on NCAA.com; only the final game is broadcast on ESPN. Because bowling is complex and the rules are unfamiliar to many, stakeholders have suggested that commentators during earlier rounds could assist spectators and ultimately help grow bowling's fan base.

**Field hockey.** Field hockey was the NCAA's first women-only sport, entering the NCAA in 1981-82, the first year that the NCAA admitted women's sports.<sup>338</sup> Overall, the NCAA budgets the lowest amount per student-athlete of all single-gender team sports on field hockey: the 2021-22 budget allows for \$1,640 per student-athlete in Division I.<sup>339</sup> Spending on the 2018-19 Division I Field Hockey Championship was \$1,778 per student-athlete.<sup>340</sup>

Field hockey stakeholders reported ongoing issues with venues, equipment, and fan engagement. Field hockey games are played on a synthetic turf material that is used in few other sports. As a result, venue options are limited and often lack the amenities of larger venues that can be used by various sports. For example, some venues do not have four locker rooms to accommodate the four teams in the semifinal rounds, and venues are often located in smaller markets, rather than in major metropolitan areas, which often have limited full-service hotel options to accommodate travel parties and fans. Stakeholders also raised concerns about travel costs impacting their ability to have competitive brackets.

Field hockey lacks sponsorship activation, likely due at least in part to its relatively small audience, limited ticket sales and, until last year, lack of any network broadcast. Field hockey has no fan fest and unlike most Division I sports, Division I field hockey's supplier contract does not provide free equipment—field hockey must pay for its own game balls and volunteer apparel.

Like several other Division I non-revenue-producing sports, field hockey does not have an internal team at the NCAA devoted to marketing and ticket sales. Instead, the host location has sole responsibility for promoting the tournament. Although some progress has been made within

<sup>337</sup> Championship Budgets 2022.

<sup>338</sup> NCAA Timeline, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/history>.

<sup>339</sup> Championship Budgets 2022.

<sup>340</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

the NCAA to promote field hockey—most notably, NCAA staff succeeded in having the field hockey championship broadcast, with ESPNU televising the semifinal and final rounds of the 2020 championship—many field hockey stakeholders continue to feel that the sport does not get the same level of support as sports with similar levels of school sponsorship,<sup>341</sup> and view that as a gender equity issue.

**Rowing.** Beginning as an Emerging Sport for Women, rowing had its inaugural NCAA championship in 1996-97.<sup>342</sup> Since then, Division I rowing participation has grown from 54 teams and 3,019 student-athletes in 1996-97 to 88 teams and 5,577 student-athletes in 2019-20.<sup>343</sup> The Division I Rowing Championship accommodates 22 teams, with 11 teams receiving an automatic qualifier.<sup>344</sup> Division I rowing has been allocated a budget of \$1,405,830 for the 2021-22 year, which funds a number of operational expenses and infrastructure costs related to setting up a championship in a state park; the 2021-22 budget allows for \$2,556 per student-athlete in Division I.<sup>345</sup> Actual spending on the 2018-19 Division I Rowing Championship was \$2,505 per student-athlete.<sup>346</sup> Stakeholders noted that there “isn’t significant promotion” of women’s rowing, although the quality of online streaming has improved in recent years, including by using drone technology to film the championship regattas.

<sup>341</sup> Division I field hockey has 77 sponsor teams.

<sup>342</sup> NCAA Timeline, NCAA (last visited Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/history>.

<sup>343</sup> 2019-20 Sponsorship & Participation Rates Report.

<sup>344</sup> 2021 Division I Rowing Championships Pre-Championships Manual at 12.

<sup>345</sup> Championship Budgets 2022.

<sup>346</sup> NCAA Division I and National Collegiate Championships Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.



## DIVISIONS II & III

The student-athlete experiences in Division II and III championships are more equitable overall than they are in Division I and NC championships. Division II and III championships are not viewed as revenue-producing or potentially revenue-producing, so none receive the type of preferential treatment from the NCAA that certain Division I championships receive. In addition, NCAA leadership in Divisions II and III explicitly prioritize gender equity across their championships, and there is more communication among Division II and III staff and committee members representing men's and women's programs.

**Background.** Of the approximately 1,100 NCAA member colleges and universities, more than 700 classify their athletics programs as Division II or III.<sup>347</sup> As detailed in our Phase I report, these institutions are generally smaller colleges and universities that dedicate fewer resources to athletics.<sup>348</sup>

Within the NCAA, there are 25 Division II championships—12 in men's sports and 13 in women's sports—and 28 Division III championships—14 in men's sports and 14 in women's sports.<sup>349</sup> These championships fall under the oversight of the SVP of Championships.<sup>350</sup> Championships staff—who split their time across multiple championships—manage and run each individual championship in conjunction with sport-specific committees.<sup>351</sup> While the NCAA Championships staff are in charge of the day-to-day aspects of executing the championships, the sport committees oversee the championships and make decisions and recommendations regarding who will host the championship and which teams or individuals will compete.<sup>352</sup> Each sport committee reports to either the Division II or III Championships Committee.<sup>353</sup> The Championships Committees oversee the general administration of the Division II and III championships, including their budgets, as well as the work of the sport committees.<sup>354</sup>

<sup>347</sup> Our Division II Story, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/our-division-ii-story>; Our Division III Story, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/our-division-iii-story>.

<sup>348</sup> Phase I Report at 101.

<sup>349</sup> Division II Championships, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/division-ii-championships>; Division III Championships, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/division-iii-championships>.

<sup>350</sup> See National Office Leadership Team, NCAA (last visited Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are/office-president/ncaa-senior-leadership-team>.

<sup>351</sup> See Phase I Report at 101.

<sup>352</sup> How the NCAA Works: Division II, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), [https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D2\\_HowNCAAWorks.pdf](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D2_HowNCAAWorks.pdf); How the NCAA Works: Division III, NCAA (Oct. 24, 2021), [https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D3\\_HowNCAAWorks.pdf](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D3_HowNCAAWorks.pdf).

<sup>353</sup> How the NCAA Works: Division II, NCAA (last visited Oct. 24, 2021), [https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D2\\_HowNCAAWorks.pdf](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D2_HowNCAAWorks.pdf); How the NCAA Works: Division III, NCAA (Oct. 24, 2021), [https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D3\\_HowNCAAWorks.pdf](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/champion-magazine/HowNCAAWorks/D3_HowNCAAWorks.pdf).

<sup>354</sup> Division II Championships Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/division-ii-championships-committee>; Division III Championships Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/division-iii-championships-committee>.

Unlike Division I, Divisions II and III operate on a multi-year budget cycle.<sup>355</sup> In Division II, that budget cycle takes place every three years. In Division III, the budget cycle generally takes place every two years, although recently, the NCAA approved a one-time, three-year budget cycle for 2021-22 through 2023-24.<sup>356</sup>

**Gender equity infrastructure.** Stakeholders and NCAA staff alike believe that the Division II and III championships generally provide equitable student-athlete experiences. As one Division II stakeholder said, “Ours is 100% equal – men’s championship and women’s championship are the same. Hopefully we’re a model for that.”

In fact, many of the sports with the greatest disparities in their Division I and NC championships offer largely equitable student-athlete experiences in their Division II and III championships. For example, while there are significant disparities in the Division I Baseball and Softball Championships, *see pp. 60-72*, the Division II and III Baseball and Softball Championships are largely equitable. In 2019, the NCAA spent approximately the same amount per student-athlete in both softball and baseball within Divisions II and III,<sup>357</sup> and stakeholders reported that the Division II and III championship experiences for baseball and softball student-athletes were similar. One softball coach in Division II noted that he had not “noticed any differences” between the two tournaments. Ice hockey is another example of a sport that offers student-athletes more equitable experiences in its Division III championships than its Division I and NC championships.<sup>358</sup>

That these championships provide more equitable experiences for their student-athletes is attributable to a few key differences between Division I and Divisions II and III. First, unlike Division I, none of the championships in Divisions II and III is viewed as revenue-producing or potentially revenue-producing. The disparities that can result from the NCAA’s dedication of resources to certain championships in order to maximize their revenue do not come into play for Divisions II and III.

Second, as a general matter, stakeholders reported more communication and coordination between men’s and women’s sports in Divisions II and III than in Division I. In particular, while several of the Division I and NC men’s and women’s sport committees have almost no communication with their men’s or women’s counterpart, *see pp. 75* (ice hockey), *83* (lacrosse), *89* (volleyball), men’s and women’s sport committees in Divisions II and III reported more frequent inter-committee communication. For example, the Division III Men’s and Women’s Ice

<sup>355</sup> DIII Strategic Planning and Finance Committee Backs Three-Year Budget Cycle, NCAA (Nov. 19, 2020), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/diii-strategic-planning-and-finance-committee-backs-three-year-budget-cycle>; 2021-24 Division II Championships Budgeting Timeline for Sport Committee Liaisons.

<sup>356</sup> DIII Strategic Planning and Finance Committee Backs Three-Year Budget Cycle, NCAA (Nov. 19, 2020), <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/diii-strategic-planning-and-finance-committee-backs-three-year-budget-cycle>; Report of the NCAA Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee June 15, 2021 Videoconference.

<sup>357</sup> NCAA Division II Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019; NCAA Division III Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.

<sup>358</sup> NCAA Division III Income Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2019.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

Hockey Committees meet at least two times a year to discuss key items that impact both championships and, as one NCAA staff member noted, “to share ideas and thoughts.” Those committees have recently discussed communicating even more frequently during the championship planning process to ensure consistency across the men’s and women’s championships.

Similarly, the NCAA staff members in Divisions II and III, as a general matter, strive to coordinate on championship planning decisions to ensure gender equity. One NCAA staff member reported working closely with their Division II and III counterparts so that “both sports are being served similarly.” The staff members in another Division II championship also reported communicating throughout the championship planning process to ensure that student-athletes are provided similar experiences “from signage to snacks provided.”

Third, as detailed in our Phase I report, the leadership in Divisions II and III prioritize gender equity among their championships. Committee members and NCAA staff stated that leadership in these divisions, including SVP of Championships Joni Comstock, Vice President of Division II Terri Gronau, and interim Vice President of Division III Louise McCleary, among others, focus on gender equity and take steps to correct any disparities of which they become aware.<sup>359</sup> Division III, in particular, prioritizes transparency with respect to gender equity in its championship administration. Each year Division III publishes facts and figures, including the total budgets for men’s versus women’s championships, on its website. For 2020-21, Division III reported that the total budget for men’s championships was approximately \$14 million, whereas the total budget for women’s championships was approximately \$12.7 million.<sup>360</sup>

Finally, as also detailed in our Phase I report, the Division II and III leadership structure enhances gender equity. All Division II and III sport committees report up to centralized Division II and III Championships Committees that can, and do, actively facilitate coordination between the men’s and women’s championships by ensuring that requests made on the men’s side are also considered for the women, and vice versa.<sup>361</sup> Although the Division II and III Championships Committees resemble the role of the Competition Oversight Committee in Division I, the Division II and III Championships Committees appear better able to ensure gender equity in their division’s championships for two key reasons. First, unlike the Competition Oversight Committee, the Division II and III Championships Committees have oversight over all Division II and III sport committees, including those for football and basketball.<sup>362</sup> As a result, they are able to review *all*

<sup>359</sup> See Phase I Report at 103.

<sup>360</sup> NCAA, Division III 2021-22 Facts and Figures (Sept. 2021), [https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/about/d3/D3\\_FactandFigures.pdf](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/about/d3/D3_FactandFigures.pdf).

<sup>361</sup> See Phase I Report at 101-03.

<sup>362</sup> Compare Division II Championships Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/division-ii-championships-committee>, and Division III Championships Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/division-iii-championships-committee>, with Division I Competition Oversight Committee, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/ncaa-division-i-competition-oversight-committee>.

sports in their divisions. In addition, Divisions II and III, unlike Division I, operate on a multi-year budget cycle, which allows for their Championships Committees to engage in a longer and more deliberative review of gender equity when approving budget requests or making decisions. As one NCAA staff member in Division II told us, the budget process—including engaging in a gender equity review of participation opportunities—“takes a long time” and, prior to adopting a “triennial” budget process, was done in a “very piecemeal” fashion.

**Gender disparities.** While Divisions II and III have managed to avoid many of the more significant gender equity issues that are present in Division I, some disparities do exist. The most common disparity concerns the venues for final rounds of the tournaments.

One illustration of this comes from the Division II Baseball and Softball Championships. For eleven of the last twelve years in which the championship was held, the finals of the Division II Baseball Championship have been held at the same venue in Cary, North Carolina.<sup>363</sup> The finals of the Division II Women’s Softball Championship have had several host venues over that same time period.<sup>364</sup> While having consistent versus changing hosts is not inherently a gender equity issue, it can result in qualitative differences in the student-athlete experience. As one stakeholder noted, the host of the Division II Men’s Baseball Championship in North Carolina is “seamless in putting on a first-class experience for all involved; identifying and providing improvements as needed each year. This allows the baseball committee to focus much of the attention on the actual on-the-field competition versus the off-the-field experiential components of the championship.”

The Division III Ice Hockey Championships present a similar issue. While the Division III Men’s Ice Hockey Championship usually occurs at a pre-determined final site,<sup>365</sup> the women compete at non-predetermined sites throughout the entire tournament.<sup>366</sup> As a result, one NCAA staff member noted, “the men have access to some more opportunities when it comes to marketing, sponsorship and promotions. . . . Typically, the men’s host is prepared with several year’s notice and therefore has more time to plan these types of things.” Yet, while having the women compete at non-predetermined sites may result in marginally less marketing and promotion for the women’s final matches, the Division III Women’s Committee strongly favors remaining at non-predetermined sites because they believe it provides the greatest student-athlete experience. An NCAA staff member opined, “The opportunity for one of the teams to play on their home ice, for all teams to play in front of good crowds and to be the center of attention in the town hosting are all factors the committee feels outweigh anything else.”

Although venues appear to be the most common source of disparities in Divisions II and III, other minor disparities in the student-athlete experience were reported. In particular, the NCAA, after conducting a review of gender equity issues across championships in the spring of

<sup>363</sup> Division II Baseball: Championship History, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/baseball/d2>.

<sup>364</sup> Division II Softball: Championship History, NCAA (last visited Oct. 19, 2021), <https://www.ncaa.com/history/softball/d2>.

<sup>365</sup> See 2020 Division III Men’s Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 9-11.

<sup>366</sup> See 2020 Division III Women’s Ice Hockey Championship Pre-Championship Manual at 12.



2021, discovered several small disparities in equipment and supplies at the Division II Softball and Baseball Tournaments, which it corrected prior to this year's tournaments.

NCAA staff members also reported that there may be one-off differences between men's and women's championships relating to a particular host and its facilities. A Division III staff member observed, "Inequities at any given time could be a result of the host commitment. This could be a result of additional funds available to enhance the experience or even a larger volunteer base that would positively impact the student-athlete experience." A different Division III staff member similarly stated, "Any differences that a men's team and a women's team may experience at preliminary sites are due to the ability of the hosts."

**Lacrosse.** The one major exception to Divisions II and III's generally positive record on gender equity is lacrosse. According to one NCAA staff member, there are "major differences between the men's and women's lacrosse championships at the [Division III] level. . . . Men's lacrosse and women's [Division III] lacrosse seem to run as two completely different sports as if they had no relation to each other."

Most key disparities between Division II and III men's and women's lacrosse result from differences in the formats for the men's and women's finals. As detailed in the lacrosse case study, *see pp. 78-79*, the top two teams in the Division II and III Men's Lacrosse Championships advance each year to a combined championship where they compete at the same time and location as the top four Division I men's lacrosse teams. The NCAA, on the other hand, generally administers separate championships for each division in women's lacrosse.

Although this differing format for the finals affects only a small number of teams in the Division II and III Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championships, the effect on these student-athletes is significant. As one stakeholder noted, the men get to play in "marquee professional sports stadiums," often in major cities, whereas the women compete in smaller arenas. In addition, because the Division II and III men's finals take place alongside the Division I finals, the Division II and III men's teams get more promotion and marketing for their final round than the women, and the "look and feel" of the tournament is completely different. As one stakeholder put it, "[d]espite only having two teams at the championship site, the men appreciate the opportunity to play in front of big crowds and part of a [Division I] championship that generates revenue for the membership."

As detailed above, *see pp. 78-79*, this disparity came to a head recently when Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts submitted a bid to host all six NCAA lacrosse championships together in 2025 and 2026. In response, the Division I Men's Lacrosse Committee raised logistical concerns about the idea of including Division II and III women's lacrosse in a joint championship. As a result, starting in 2025 and 2026, the Division I women's championship will join the Divisions I, II, and III men's championship at a single venue, while the Division II and III women's championships will be held entirely separately. The Division II and III Women's Lacrosse Committees and the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association strongly oppose this decision. One women's lacrosse committee member stated, "I cannot think of a more textbook example of systematic gender inequity at NCAA Championships, and would anticipate strong

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

opposition from members of the women's lacrosse community if this is not appropriately addressed.”

Likely due to the different formats of the championships, there appears to be very little to no communication between Division II and III men's and women's lacrosse. Committee members reported having no interactions with their men's or women's counterparts, and the staff liaisons to the men's and women's committees appear to work entirely independently of one another. According to one stakeholder, “unintentional inequities” likely result each year due to this lack of communication.



## ENSURING PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUITY

Throughout this review, we have been very cognizant of the concerted efforts by many over the years to improve gender equity at the NCAA championships. Due to this long-standing commitment, progress has been made. The systemic and structural changes we have recommended in this report (and in our Phase I report) call for a redoubling of that commitment. Fortunately, we are already seeing a willingness to step up for change, not only in our hundreds of conversations with conference commissioners, athletic directors, senior woman administrators, coaches, student-athletes, sports groups, NCAA leadership and staff, and many, many others, but also in the actions being taken by the NCAA, both in response to our Phase I report and on its own.

As we discussed in our Phase I report, the events at this year's championships have provided the NCAA, its members, and its corporate and media partners with a unique opportunity to work together to improve the student-athlete experience at the championships going forward. We are confident that working together, the college sports community and its supporters can do just that.

### Recommendation E

For the next five years, conduct an annual public assessment of the NCAA's progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this report and the Phase I report.

To keep the college sports community informed and engaged in this process, and to ensure that the best possible use is made of this opportunity to make changes at the NCAA, in our Phase I report, we recommended that the NCAA conduct an annual public assessment for the next five years of the NCAA's progress in implementing the Phase I recommendations.<sup>367</sup> That assessment should include the NCAA's progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this Phase II report as well. The NCAA's assessment should be made public on the NCAA's website and provided to the following list of expanded recipients: the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women's Athletics, the Division I Board of Directors, the Division II and III Presidents Councils, the Men's and Women's Basketball and Basketball Committees (all divisions), the Division I Competition Oversight Committee, and the Division II and III Championships Committees.

<sup>367</sup> See Phase I Report, Recommendation 7.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Although not present in all NCAA championships, the gender equity challenges that the NCAA faces are significant and cut across the organization. The recommendations outlined above, and listed again below, provide a comprehensive roadmap for advancing the gender equity principles to which the NCAA and its members have committed.

### ***Organizational structure and culture (see pp. 13-27 for details)***

- Recommendation A.1: Develop clear criteria for making decisions about resource allocation among championships that integrate gender equity principles and transparency into the process.
- Recommendation A.2: Establish a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data across the NCAA's 90 championships that will facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits.
- Recommendation A.3: Complete a gender equity impact statement in connection with significant actions taken outside of the annual championship planning process.
- Recommendation A.4: Increase the number of senior staff in the NCAA's Championships structure to improve oversight of gender equity.
- Recommendation A.5: Over the next five years, conduct a "zero-based" budget for each championship to ensure that any gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable.
- Recommendation A.6: Perform a real-time gender equity audit of all men's and women's championships and prepare an annual report on the results.
- Recommendation A.7: Conduct an external gender equity assessment of all championships in five years.

### ***Broadcast, corporate sponsorship, and branding (see pp. 28-36 for details)***

- Recommendation B.1: Consider commissioning an independent valuation of the media rights of other championships or championship "packages."
- Recommendation B.2: Ensure equitable branding for all championships, including but not limited to gender modifiers in championship titles.

### ***The student-athlete experience (see pp. 37-50 for details)***

- Recommendation C.1: Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at all championships are gender-equitable.
- Recommendation C.2: Create a transparent process for reviewing proposals to increase the size of a championship's bracket/field, squad, bench, or travel party size that takes gender equity into account.



***Championship and committee structure (see pp. 51-59 for details)***

- Recommendation D.1: Conduct an assessment and develop a plan for combining or co-locating men's and women's championships where appropriate.
- Recommendation D.2: For non-joint committees, establish regular communications between the men's and women's sport committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.

***Ensuring progress on gender equity (see p. 121 for details)***

- Recommendation E: For the next five years, conduct an annual public assessment of the NCAA's progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this report and the Phase I report.

**EXHIBIT A: SPORT-BY-SPORT FACT SHEETS**

<b>KEY<sup>368</sup></b>	
<b>ITEM<sup>369</sup></b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship<sup>370</sup></b>	The year that the NCAA first administered a championship in the sport.
<b>Combined Men's and Women's Championships?<sup>371</sup></b>	Whether men and women student-athletes compete in a combined championship. There are four types of combined championships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joint:</b> The men's and women's championships take place entirely at the same place and time, but the men and women student-athletes compete separately.</li> <li>• <b>Partial Joint:</b> Certain rounds of the men's and women's championships take place at the same place and time, and the men and women student-athletes compete separately.</li> <li>• <b>Co-located:</b> The men's and women's championships entirely/partially take place at the same place, but on staggered dates.</li> <li>• <b>Co-ed:</b> The men's and women's championships take place entirely at the same place and time, and men and women student-athletes compete against one another or on the same teams.</li> </ul>
<b>Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?</b>	Whether a single sport committee administers both the men's and women's championships.
<b>Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship<sup>372</sup></b>	The number of teams or individuals that compete in the championship.
<b>Squad Size/Travel Party Size</b>	For team sports, squad size is the maximum number of student-athletes per team allowed to dress in uniform and participate at the championship. Travel party size is the total number of people per team for which the NCAA provides travel reimbursement and per diem.
<b>% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship</b>	For team sports, the total number of teams that participate in the championship divided by the total number of teams at NCAA member schools who are eligible for the championship. For individual sports, the total number of student-athletes who participate in the championship divided by the total number of student-athletes at NCAA member schools who are eligible for the championship.

<sup>368</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all data contained in the factsheets is for the 2021-22 academic year.

<sup>369</sup> The factsheets do not contain data on ticket sales or broadcast viewership. While we received some data on ticket sales and broadcast viewership from the NCAA, the NCAA does not maintain uniform data for all championships.

<sup>370</sup> This information was obtained through the NCAA website and other publicly available sources.

<sup>371</sup> The information contained in the categories "Combined Men's and Women's Championships?" and "Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?" was derived from communications with NCAA staff members, documents provided by the NCAA, and publicly available sources.

<sup>372</sup> The information contained in the categories "Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship," "Squad Size/Travel Party Size," and "% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship" was provided by the NCAA.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

KEY	
ITEM	DESCRIPTION
<b>Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)</b> <sup>373</sup>	The station or streaming service that broadcasts or streams the championship's final match or event.
<b>NCAA Staff (FTE)</b>	The amount of time that NCAA employees spend on the championship, in a unit called a full-time equivalent or FTE. The NCAA calculated this number for each championship in April 2021 after asking employees across all departments to allocate the percentage of their time spent on each championship. <sup>374</sup>
<b>Budget Allocation</b> <sup>375</sup>	The total amount that the NCAA budgeted for the championship in the 2021-22 academic year.
<b>Budget Allocation (2018-19)</b> <sup>376</sup>	The total amount that the NCAA budgeted for the championship in the 2018-19 academic year.
<b>Total Spending (2018-19)</b>	The NCAA's calculation of its total disbursements for the championship in the 2018-19 academic year. This number appears in the NCAA's yearly championship income statements. <sup>377</sup> The number is comprised of: (i) the amount that the NCAA spends directly on the championship, such as on team travel, per diems, and promotions and marketing; and (ii) any payments from the NCAA to host institutions. The number does not include the amount spent on salaries and benefits for NCAA staff who work on the championships.
<b>Total Revenue (2018-19)</b>	The gross revenue that the NCAA received from the championship in the 2018-19 academic year, excluding revenue generated from television and marketing rights fees. This number appears in the NCAA's yearly championship income statements.

<sup>373</sup> This information is from the following NCAA website: <https://web1.ncaa.org/NCAATV/exec/query>. If no championship was held in 2020-21, which is indicated by an asterisk (\*), then the data contained in the fact sheet is from the most recent year that the championship was held.

<sup>374</sup> This measurement does not capture how some specialized employees can significantly impact a championship while only spending a small percentage of their time on that championship.

<sup>375</sup> The information contained in the categories "Budget Allocation," "Budget Allocation (2018-19)," "Total Spending (2018-19)," and "Total Revenue (2018-19)" was provided by the NCAA.

<sup>376</sup> The 2018-19 academic year is the last full year that the NCAA held all of its championships without accommodations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>377</sup> The yearly championship income statements are unaudited financial statements.

## NCAA External Gender Equity Review

Phase II

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982	1982	1982
	Men	1947	1968	1976
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	No	No	No
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No	No	No
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	64 teams	64 teams	64 teams
	Men	64 teams	56 teams	60 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	20/28	20/26	20/25
	Men	27/35	25/29	25/30
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	21.6%	22.7%	15.6%
	Men	21.4%	22.4%	15.4%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPN	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
	Men	ESPN, ESPN2	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	3.51	0.84	0.63
	Men	5.08	0.97	0.95
Budget Allocation	Women	\$5,018,415	\$2,330,135	\$1,821,027
	Men	\$6,207,213	\$2,393,804	\$2,578,548
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$4,802,797	\$2,029,332	\$1,604,460
	Men	\$6,126,157	\$2,472,528	\$2,339,840
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$6,361,695	\$2,132,371	\$1,676,688
	Men	\$16,036,861	\$2,278,858	\$1,971,581
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$4,009,901	\$84,302	\$102,177
	Men	\$28,316,064	\$157,670	\$145,807



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

<b>BEACH VOLLEYBALL (WOMEN ONLY)</b>	
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NC</b>
<b>Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship</b>	2016
<b>Combined Men's and Women's Championships?</b>	N/A
<b>Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?</b>	N/A
<b>Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship</b>	8 teams
<b>Squad Size/Travel Party Size</b>	12/17
<b>% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship</b>	9.5%
<b>Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)</b>	ESPN
<b>NCAA Staff (FTE)</b>	1.55
<b>Budget Allocation</b>	\$507,761
<b>Budget Allocation (2018-19)</b>	\$491,400
<b>Spending (2018-19)</b>	\$986,373
<b>Total Revenue (2018-19)</b>	\$498,573

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

<b>BOWLING (WOMEN ONLY)</b>	
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NC</b>
<b>Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship</b>	2004
<b>Combined Men's and Women's Championships?</b>	N/A
<b>Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?</b>	N/A
<b>Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship</b>	16 teams
<b>Squad Size/Travel Party Size</b>	10/13
<b>% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship</b>	17.4%
<b>Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)</b>	ESPNU
<b>NCAA Staff (FTE)</b>	0.71
<b>Budget Allocation</b>	\$470,743
<b>Budget Allocation (2018-19)</b>	\$322,254
<b>Spending (2018-19)</b>	\$403,009
<b>Total Revenue (2018-19)</b>	\$8,870



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

CROSS COUNTRY				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1981	1981	1981
	Men	1938	1958	1973
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Joint	Joint	Joint
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	31 teams + 38 individuals	34 teams + 24 individuals	32 teams + 70 individuals
	Men	31 teams + 38 individuals	34 teams + 24 individuals	32 teams + 70 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	7 (squad size)	7 (squad size)	7 (squad size)
	Men	3 non-athletes per team, 1 non-athlete per 1-3 individuals, and 2 non-athletes per 4-6 individuals (travel party size)	2 non-athletes per team, 1 non-athlete per 1-4 individuals, and 2 non-athletes for 5+ individuals (travel party size)	2 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-5 individuals (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship <sup>378</sup>	Women	4.4%	6.9%	5.5%
	Men	5.1%	6.9%	5.4%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPNU	FloSports*	FloSports*
	Men			
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.45	0.46	0.28
	Men	0.54	0.46	0.27
Budget Allocation	Women	\$654,215	\$647,792	\$693,809
	Men	\$683,235	\$672,229	\$671,433
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$629,826	\$568,613	\$615,980
	Men	\$670,253	\$618,365	\$594,480
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$670,485	\$598,101	\$630,547
	Men	\$641,895	\$619,854	\$618,373
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$28,800	\$3,485	\$5,423
	Men	\$28,800	\$3,485	\$5,423

<sup>378</sup> Calculated as the total number of student-athletes who participate in the championship over the total number of student-athletes at NCAA member schools who are eligible for the championship.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

FENCING		
ITEM	GENDER	NC
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1990
	Men	1941
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Co-ed
	Men	
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes
	Men	
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	72 individuals
	Men	72 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	1-12 (squad size) <sup>379</sup>
	Men	Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	10.8%
	Men	
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPN3/ESPNU (Tape Delay)
	Men	
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.50
	Men	
Budget Allocation	Women	\$535,026
	Men	
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$526,264
	Men	
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$555,050
	Men	
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$14,375
	Men	

<sup>379</sup> All participants qualify as individuals; maximum number of qualifiers per institution is 12.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

FIELD HOCKEY (WOMEN ONLY)			
ITEM	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	1981	1981	1981
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	N/A		
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	N/A		
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	18 teams	6 teams	24 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	24/28	24/30	24/29
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	23.4%	16.7%	14.3%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	ESPNU	NCAA.com*	NCAA.com*
NCAA Staff (FTE)	0.84	0.75	0.47
Budget Allocation	\$708,494	\$246,700	\$569,995
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	\$674,824	\$184,419	\$508,420
Spending (2018-19)	\$768,055	\$220,095	\$480,432
Total Revenue (2018-19)	\$41,567	\$2,405	\$22,439

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

FOOTBALL (MEN ONLY)			
ITEM	DI (FCS)	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	1978	1973	1973
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	N/A		
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	N/A		
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	24 teams	28 teams	32 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	70/145 (final round) 64/130 (preliminary rounds)	58/70	58/68
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	19.2%	17.2%	13%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	ESPN2	ESPNU*	ESPNU*
NCAA Staff (FTE)	3.6	1.0	1.04
Budget Allocation	\$5,439,377	\$2,812,570	\$2,185,336
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	\$5,400,045	\$2,487,055	\$2,044,140
Spending (2018-19)	\$7,137,685	\$3,216,972	\$2,192,360
Total Revenue (2018-19)	\$5,763,917	\$448,643	\$615,883



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

GOLF				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982	1996	1996
	Men	1939	1963	1975
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Co-located (finals only)	No	No
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No	No	No
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	72 teams + 36 individuals	48 teams + 24 individuals	29 teams + 6 individuals
	Men	81 teams + 45 individuals	80 teams + 32 individuals	43 teams + 6 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	5 (squad size)  3 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-3 individuals (travel party size)	5/6 (squad size for regionals/finals)  2 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-3 individuals (travel party size)	5 (squad size)  2 non-athletes per team and individuals (travel party size)
	Men	5 (squad size)  3 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-3 individuals (travel party size)	5/6 (squad size for regionals/finals)  2 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-3 individuals (travel party size)	5 (squad size)  1 non-athletes per team and individuals (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship <sup>380</sup>	Women	15.4%	16.9%	8.8%
	Men	18.2%	19.3%	7.3%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	Golf Channel	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
	Men	Golf Channel	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.89	0.31	0.44
	Men	1.38	0.26	0.11
Budget Allocation	Women	\$798,357	\$738,733	\$560,719
	Men	\$922,867	\$1,016,926	\$716,034
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$779,551	\$597,596	\$410,390
	Men	\$889,848	\$877,873	\$624,180

<sup>380</sup> Calculated as the total number of student-athletes who participate in the championship over the total number of student-athletes at NCAA member schools who are eligible for the championship.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

GOLF				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$989,727	\$589,664	\$420,260
	Men	\$1,014,937	\$854,465	\$615,684
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$251,625	\$15,000	\$0
	Men	\$251,625	\$0	\$0



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

GYMNASTICS		
ITEM	GENDER	NC
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982
	Men	1938
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	No
	Men	
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No
	Men	
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	36 teams + 28 individuals
	Men	12 teams + 35 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	15/20 (squad size)  Maximum of 4 non-athletes per school for individual participants (travel party size)
	Men	12/17 (squad size)  Maximum of 4 non-athletes per school for individual participants (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship <sup>181</sup>	Women	44.4%
	Men	80.0%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ABC
	Men	Big Ten Network
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	1.34
	Men	0.62
Budget Allocation	Women	\$824,649
	Men	\$300,366
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$802,246
	Men	\$289,126
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$1,164,234
	Men	\$320,190
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$785,313
	Men	\$59,093

<sup>181</sup> Calculated as the total number of teams that participate in the championship over the total number of teams at NCAA member schools who are eligible for the championship.

## NCAA External Gender Equity Review

Phase II

ICE HOCKEY				
ITEM	GENDER	NC (W) / DI (M)	NC (W)	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	2001		2002
	Men	1948	N/A	1984
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	No		No
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No		No
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	8 teams		10 teams
	Men	16 teams	N/A	12 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	24/34		23/28
	Men	27/37	N/A	23/28
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	19.5%		14.9%
	Men	26.7%	N/A	14.3%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPNU		NCAA.com*
	Men	ESPN	N/A	NCAA.com*
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.67		0.43
	Men	2.62	N/A	0.33
Budget Allocation	Women	\$615,289		\$390,678
	Men	\$1,974,187	N/A	\$400,608
Budget Allocation (2018- 19)	Women	\$650,041		\$318,910
	Men	\$1,930,094	N/A	\$380,950
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$656,827		\$299,516
	Men	\$4,235,662	N/A	\$455,321
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$154,189		\$37,502
	Men	\$5,842,212	N/A	\$100,963



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1983	1985	1985
	Men	1965	1985	1985
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Joint	Joint	Joint
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	284 individuals	202 individuals	396 individuals
	Men	284 individuals	202 individuals	396 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	N/A (squad size) Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)	N/A (squad size) Maximum of 2 non-athletes (travel party size)	N/A (squad size) Maximum of 4 non-athletes (travel party size)
	Men			
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	2.1%	3.2%	4.5%
	Men	2.7%	3.1%	4.0 %
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPN3	NCAA.com	NCAA.com*
	Men			
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.76	0.28	0.41
	Men	0.73	0.30	0.40
Budget Allocation	Women	\$681,932	\$713,548	\$807,080
	Men	\$863,473	\$715,223	\$878,373
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$659,373	\$641,710	\$764,475
	Men	\$814,046	\$657,313	\$842,485
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$658,069	\$573,337	\$621,968
	Men	\$773,005 <sup>382</sup>	\$578,172	\$734,657 <sup>383</sup>
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$57,623	\$12,620	\$23,097
	Men	\$57,623	\$12,620	\$23,097

<sup>382</sup> The Division I men's indoor track and field expenses include all expenses for the Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee, including airfare, per diem, and lodging for the championship.

<sup>383</sup> The Division III men's indoor track and field expenses include all expenses for the Division III Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee, including airfare, per diem, and lodging for the championship.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

LACROSSE				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982	2001	1985
	Men	1971	1974	1980
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	No <sup>384</sup>	No	No
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No	No	No
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	29 teams	16 teams	44 teams
	Men	17 teams	12 teams	36 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	32/40	28/30	28/33
	Men	32/40	32/34	32/37
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	24.8%	14%	15.1%
	Men	23%	16%	14.6%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPNU	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
	Men	ESPN2	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE) <sup>385</sup>	Women	1.01	0.34	0.67
	Men	1.99	0.81	0.91
Budget Allocation	Women	\$1,387,859	\$619,896	\$1,011,543
	Men	\$1,622,229	\$358,353	\$751,336
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$1,343,722	\$623,598	\$853,750
	Men	\$1,655,657	\$336,045	\$636,990
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$1,737,259	\$566,503	\$1,049,977
	Men	\$2,619,073	\$586,709	\$961,838
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$417,773	\$20,631	\$43,077
	Men	\$2,716,860	\$443,807	\$470,572

<sup>384</sup> As discussed in the Lacrosse Case Study, the Divisions I, II, and III Men's Lacrosse Championship finals are joint and occur at the same place and time. In 2025 and 2026, the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship will join the Division I, II, and III Men's Lacrosse Championships in their joint championship.

<sup>385</sup> In April 2021, the NCAA increased the staff assigned to the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship to parallel the staff assigned to the Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship. That change is not reflected in these numbers.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982 <sup>386</sup>		
	Men	1921	1963	1974
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Joint	Joint	Joint
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	1830 individuals <sup>387</sup>	283 individuals	546 individuals
	Men	1830 individuals <sup>388</sup>	283 individuals	508 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	N/A (squad size) Maximum of 5 non-athletes per team (travel party size)	N/A (squad size) Maximum of 2 non-athletes per team (travel party size)	N/A (squad size) Maximum of 4 non-athletes per team (travel party size)
	Men			
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	13.4%	3.7%	5.8%
	Men	16.1%	3.6%	4.8%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPNU	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
	Men	ESPN2		
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.82	0.28	0.42
	Men	0.79	0.28	0.40
Budget Allocation	Women	\$1,824,800	\$914,670	\$983,266
	Men	\$1,905,225	\$926,444	\$957,863
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$1,723,448	\$843,697	\$939,610
	Men	\$1,870,723	\$855,134	\$931,620
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$1,641,014	\$1,006,722	\$977,121
	Men	\$1,660,194	\$1,011,669	\$956,944
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$232,068	\$11,443	\$16,099
	Men	\$237,028	\$11,443	\$16,099

<sup>386</sup> Each division had a separate championship beginning in 1982.

<sup>387</sup> This number includes regional participants.

<sup>388</sup> This number includes regional participants.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

RIFLE		
ITEM	GENDER	NC
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1980
	Men	
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Co-ed
	Men	
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes
	Men	
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	48 individuals
	Men	
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	N/A (squad size) Maximum 5 non-athletes (travel party size)
	Men	
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	16%
	Men	
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	NCAA.com
	Men	
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.36
	Men	
Budget Allocation	Women	\$231,249
	Men	
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$225,931
	Men	
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$180,516
	Men	
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$18,590
	Men	



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

ROWING (WOMEN ONLY)			
ITEM	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	1997	2002	2002
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	N/A		
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	N/A		
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	22 teams	6 teams	8 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	25/31	16/21	21/26
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	25%	37.5%	17.4%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	NCAA.com	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE)	0.6	0.21	0.21
Budget Allocation	\$1,405,830	\$471,591	\$442,495
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	\$1,341,503	\$276,253	\$428,430
Spending (2018-19)	\$1,377,527	\$267,102	\$370,066
Total Revenue (2018-19)	\$34,192	\$8,548	\$14,247

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

SKIING		
ITEM	GENDER	NC
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1983 <sup>389</sup>
	Men	1954
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Co-ed <sup>390</sup>
	Men	
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes
	Men	
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	148 individuals
	Men	
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	<p>Skiing participants are determined by region and event (Nordic or Alpine)</p> <p>Central: 7 Nordic; East: 17 Alpine, 16 Nordic; West: 17 Alpine, 17 Nordic (squad size)<sup>391</sup></p> <p>Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)</p>
	Men	<p>Skiing participants are determined by region and event (Nordic or Alpine)</p> <p>Central: 8 Nordic; East: 17 Alpine, 15 Nordic; West: 17 Alpine, 17 Nordic (squad size)</p> <p>Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)</p>
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	17.6%
	Men	
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	NCAA.com
	Men	
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.43
	Men	
Budget Allocation	Women	\$614,739
	Men	

<sup>389</sup> Only men participated in the championship prior to 1983, but when women joined, it became a co-ed sport and championship.

<sup>390</sup> Even though NCAA National Collegiate Skiing is "mixed" gender, only men can compete in the men's events and only women can compete in the women's events at the championship.

<sup>391</sup> In addition to these guidelines, the maximum team size shall be 12 persons, three per gender per discipline, composed of a maximum of six men and six women. The maximum entry in an individual event for any team is three individuals.



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

SKIING		
ITEM	GENDER	NC
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$600,505
	Men	
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$596,328
	Men	
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$0
	Men	

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

SOCCER				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982	1988	1986
	Men	1959	1972	1974
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Partial Joint (only this year)	Partial Joint	Partial Joint
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No	No	No
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	64 teams	56 teams	64 teams
	Men	48 teams	40 teams	64 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	22/28	24/28	24/29
	Men	21/27	24/28	24/29
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	19.1%	22.0%	14.6%
	Men	23.5%	19.7%	15.3%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPNU	NCAA.com*	NCAA.com*
	Men	ESPN2	NCAA.com*	NCAA.com*
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	1.16	0.65	0.55
	Men	1.03	0.79	0.63
Budget Allocation	Women	\$2,584,829	\$1,613,902	\$1,418,138
	Men	\$2,250,368	\$1,301,742	\$1,399,137
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$2,507,718	\$1,533,886	\$1,330,600
	Men	\$2,152,552	\$1,162,992	\$1,248,040
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$3,487,928	\$1,523,331	\$1,314,859
	Men	\$2,411,151	\$1,199,217	\$1,174,260
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$659,792	\$53,915	\$66,715
	Men	\$496,656	\$32,853	\$64,481



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

SWIMMING & DIVING				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982	1982	1982
	Men	1938	1964	1975
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Occasionally Co-located <sup>392</sup>	Joint	Joint
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	322 individuals	146 individuals	319 individuals
	Men	270 individuals	146 individuals	260 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size <sup>393</sup>	Women	18 (squad size)	18 (squad size)	18 (squad size)
		Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)	Maximum of 2 non-athletes (travel party size)	Maximum of 4 non-athletes (travel party size)
	Men	18 (squad size)	18 (squad size)	18 (squad size)
		Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)	Maximum of 2 non-athletes (travel party size)	Maximum of 4 non-athletes (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	5.6%	6.7%	6%
	Men	7.2%	9.0%	6%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPNU	NCAA.com	NCAA.com*
	Men	ESPNU		
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.85	0.29	0.39
	Men	0.53	0.28	0.43
Budget Allocation	Women	\$814,476	\$614,088	\$704,056
	Men	\$803,952	\$489,604	\$675,307
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$790,685	\$491,791	\$696,960
	Men	\$781,772	\$420,042	\$630,960
Spending (2018-19) <sup>394</sup>	Women	\$975,579	\$481,781	\$705,166
	Men	\$994,154	\$414,050	\$643,109

<sup>392</sup> In some years, the Division I Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Championships are held at the same location; in other years, they are not held at the same location.

<sup>393</sup> For swimming and diving, the squad size is counted as follows: "An entrant who swims will be counted as one competitor"; "An entrant who swims and dives will be counted as one competitor"; "An entrant who only dives will be counted as one-half of a competitor in the total team limit"; and "For relays, actual participation in the preliminary heats and/or finals of an event shall be counted against the 18 competitors allowed." 2021 Division I Swimming & Diving Championships Pre-Championships Manual.

<sup>394</sup> The men's swimming and diving expenses include almost all of the expenses for the division's Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Committee, including airfare, per diem, and lodging for the championship.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

SWIMMING & DIVING				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$154,817	\$23,728	\$52,708
	Men	\$154,817	\$23,728	\$52,708



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

TENNIS				
ITEM	GENDER	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1982	1982	1982
	Men	1946	1963	1976
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	Partial Joint	Partial Joint	Partial Joint
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	Yes	Yes	No
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	128 individuals + 64 teams	48 teams	49 teams + 32 singles players and 16 doubles teams
	Men	128 individuals + 64 teams	48 teams	44 teams + 32 singles players and 16 doubles teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	9 (squad size)	9 (squad size)	9 (squad size)
	Men	4 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-3 individuals (travel party size)	2 non-athletes per team (travel party size)	2 non-athletes per team and 1 non-athlete per 1-5 individuals (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship <sup>395</sup>	Women	20.6%	23.5%	13.3%
	Men	25.5%	32.2%	13.3%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	Tennis Channel	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
	Men	Tennis Channel	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.72	0.35	0.51
	Men	0.39	0.36	0.11
Budget Allocation	Women	\$834,237	\$695,572	\$788,722
	Men	\$845,997	\$772,238	\$754,694
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$811,885	\$680,233	\$742,520
	Men	\$800,704	\$695,198	\$700,520
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$904,488	\$638,680	\$702,770
	Men	\$945,004	\$649,336	\$670,845
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$46,870	\$1,417	\$0
	Men	\$47,651	\$1,137	\$0

<sup>395</sup> Calculated as the total number of teams that participate in the championship over the total number of teams at NCAA member schools who are eligible for the championship.

NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

VOLLEYBALL				
ITEM	GENDER	DI (W) / NC (M)	DII (W) / NC (M)	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	1981	1981	1981
	Men	1970		2012
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	No		
	Men			
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No		
	Men			
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	64 teams	64 teams	64 teams
	Men	7 teams		16 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	15/22	17/20	17/22
	Men	15/21		17/22
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	19.2%	21.5%	14.8%
	Men	14.6%		14.8%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	ESPN2	NCAA.com*	NCAA.com*
	Men	ESPNU		NCAA.com*
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	3.11	0.52	0.40
	Men	0.62		0.45
Budget Allocation	Women	\$2,667,567	\$1,623,022	\$1,227,844
	Men	\$260,641		\$380,719
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$2,547,784	\$1,204,694	\$1,158,420
	Men	\$247,149		\$319,890
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$3,811,633	\$1,526,998	\$1,185,134
	Men	\$376,942		\$280,464
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$3,000,600	\$72,802	\$66,495
	Men	\$172,806		\$13,077



NCAA External Gender Equity Review  
Phase II

WATER POLO		
ITEM	GENDER	NC
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	Women	2001
	Men	1969
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	Women	No
	Men	
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	Women	No
	Men	
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	Women	10 teams
	Men	8 teams
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Women	16/20
	Men	16/20
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	Women	15.4%
	Men	16.3%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	Women	NCAA.com
	Men	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE)	Women	0.52
	Men	0.59
Budget Allocation	Women	\$348,539
	Men	\$268,030
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	Women	\$335,336
	Men	\$223,305
Spending (2018-19)	Women	\$326,138
	Men	\$265,594
Total Revenue (2018-19)	Women	\$42,682
	Men	\$78,049

## NCAA External Gender Equity Review

Phase II

WRESTLING (MEN ONLY)			
ITEM	DI	DII	DIII
Year NCAA Started Sponsoring Championship	1928	1963	1974
Combined Men's and Women's Championships?	N/A		
Combined Men's and Women's Sport Committees?	N/A		
Number of Teams/Individuals in Championship	330 individuals	180 individuals	180 individuals
Squad Size/Travel Party Size	Maximum of 5 non-athletes (travel party size)	Maximum of 2 non-athletes (travel party size)	Maximum of 4 non-athletes (travel party size)
% of Student-Athletes Who Participate in Championship	13.0%	9%	5.8%
Broadcast Station (Final Match) (2020-21)	ESPN	NCAA.com	NCAA.com
NCAA Staff (FTE)	2.59	0.73	0.88
Budget Allocation	\$1,355,193	\$562,068	\$471,843
Budget Allocation (2018-19)	\$1,396,043	\$515,474	\$455,190
Spending (2018-19)	\$2,317,219	\$551,468	\$567,987
Total Revenue (2018-19)	\$5,887,919	\$70,448	\$96,361



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